Withdrawn from

# Art Thoughts

THE

EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS OF AN AMERICAN AMATEUR IN EUROPE

BY

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## TO WHOMSOEVER IT CONCERNS.

I owe it to myself to put forth this book as the more matured result of studies especially directed towards the general introduction and spread of Art in America, the particular scope and aim of which were given in previous works, particularly the "Art-Idea," of which these "Thoughts" are intended to be an extension and completion. Less I could not do to put my object and position clearly before the public, although it may be already out of patience with the theme and the advocate. I wish it to be a final effort on my part, and to pass to abler hands, while leaving to me the cheering retrospection of having broken ground for them. With this expectation let us take comfort. Some brief portions may be recognized as having appeared in our own and English magazines this year. In conclusion I would commend whatever there is true and lovely in Art, as exemplified in these Experiences, to the observation and study of my young children, to whom I most earnestly and affectionately dedicate these "Thoughts" as so many crumbs which have fallen to their father from the Masters' tables.

Boston, *September*, 1869.

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# ART THOUGHTS.

## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

*Purpose of the book.*

SINCE 1852, I have studied Art, chiefly to find out the part it has sustained in effete civilizations, and to ascertain its present condition with reference to the future. The satisfaction derived from this study amply compensates its time and cost. But it would be incomplete, if the results might not be made useful to others. I shall try to give a succinct view of the subject as a whole, tracing its varied expressions to our time, hoping to make the meaning, origin, and aim of Art more clear to the common mind than it seems to be at present, as well as to proffer some hints for its culture. It would be presumptuous to offer this little work to the consideration of the erudite of any nation. In my own country there are few who give Art any serious attention; fewer still, it may be, to sympathize with my attempt or accept my conclusions. Yet the topic is attractive to many. Those who are unable to study the history of Art at its native sources may be willing to follow me in my experiences, while freely exercising their own judgments. To them, therefore, I address myself.

What is the origin and scope of the art-idea? What has it done for men, and what may it still do? What are its relations to nature, science, and religion? How are communities made better or worse by it? To what extent is it indispensable to our individual happiness? These questions cover all the ground we need examine.

Our first difficulty arises from the fact that words are vague in the ratio of their generalization. Comprehensive nouns like Art, Science, Religion, Philosophy, or God, convey to different

minds varied conceptions. Each degree of knowledge, and even of temperament, has its formula of expression. Thus language is largely conventional. As minds grow, the significance of words changes to them. I cannot, therefore, hope to be understood by all exactly as I could desire; but I may make my use of essential terms intelligible to thinkers.

*Art a human want. The ideal.*

Art has its origin deep in a human want. I would not exclude animals from a certain consciousness of its presence, for even they enjoy something above and beyond physical functions, indicative of a receptive sense of pleasure, as if they too welcomed their ideal. If man were solely a being of abstract reason, the exercise of thought would be sufficient to his happiness. But he has also heart and imagination which demand gratification. Both clamor for more than they ever obtain. This unfulfilled wish constitutes their ideal, or that subtile aspiration of the soul which is the essence of noble art. This it is which gives a halo to the beauty it evokes; which fires the sentiments and exalts the intellect, imparting an undefinable joy as the object responds to our amorous appeal: a language felt rather than heard. Our happiness is the more complete inasmuch that it is dissociated with notions of labor or utility. Fine art suggests neither. As with the fragrance of a flower or the radiance of a sunset, we inhale its sweetness in unconscious gratitude, forming the while close friendships with its images. No one need expect to comprehend art in its ultimate sense, unless he is capable of receiving its impressions as spontaneously and supersensuously as he would those of love; for art is first passion, then conviction. Whence its power is not to be ciphered. Ends, not means, it affirms. Unless we apprehend the spiritual element, our satisfaction must limit itself to its technical and material functions.

Both science and art aspire to sublime things; the former to discover and use, the latter to represent and suggest. Science tells us of what salts a tear is made, but can give no insight into its cause, as can art. Analyzing the excretions of the kidneys, it decides with mathematical accuracy on the relative activity of mind and muscle, informing us how much passion, thought, or repose a man has had in a given time, and even claims that thought itself is only one form of matter. In this way it treats movement and character, which art also embodies in solid material in a different fashion. We can thus understand the kinship of art and science, and their diverging technical offices.

Some of these are confounded in popular apprehension by an endeavor to enhance the credit of certain occupations. Photography is not art, but a process of science to which art may add grace and beauty. As commonly practiced, it is chemical handicraft, and not to be spoken of as art, though, under its guidance, capable of making one forget its scientific origin in æsthetic satisfaction. Further, it is a useful servant of the artist, in many familiar ways, besides disseminating copies of the works of art in a cheap and portable form. Chromo-lithography is another manual process of less importance and truth of characterization. We should not confuse the shadow with the substance of art any more than we do the abstract idea with the printed word.

Cookery, hair-dressing, and tailoring, owing to the transcedental importance given them in France, have trespassed on the domain of art. In that country, tailors, cooks, and barbers are often called artists. This misnomer may be exhilarating to individual vanity; but it does not elevate these occupations though it does tend to degrade art, by vulgarizing its associations and lowering its mental standard. Moreover, it is a sad commentary on the aspirations of a people to permit any handicraft to rank as art; for it virtually says that muscle is entitled to the highest honors of mind, and puts the servant in the place of his master. To cook a meal, stitch clothes, or dress hair no more makes an artist than to blow glass or shoe horses. There is no need of jumbling art and manual labor. One is the product of thought, imagination, feeling; the other is work done according to rule, receipt, or pattern, in which dexterity of hand is of more account than mental action. Art can benefit a handicraft by making its product ornamental and pleasurable instead of plain or ugly; but ugliness and coarseness, as we perceive in things in general, do not diminish their absolute utility.

*Artist and craftsman. The true artist.*

An artist is called to higher functions than the craftsman. By the same election no cook, barber, or photographer can be an artist, or else he would not be what he is. Whenever handicraft aspires to the ornamental, the artist must be called in. Calling charcoal a diamond does not make it one; nevertheless the smutty wood can be transformed into the brilliant gem. No man of taste is taken in by names, for ugliness does not become beauty by the addition of a lie. I emphasize these points now, that I may not be misunderstood later in my application of the art-idea.

As there are many artificers who boast themselves artists, so there are many men who pass current as artists in virtue of prodigious self-assertion, maybe deception, and turning out work as a printer prints books. They create nothing; recast nothing; fulfill no law of art; but execute terribly, in acres of canvas and tons of stone, which, being called pictures and statues, impose on the credulous by sheer nomenclature. These forgeries abound in all countries and times; for art, being pleasanter in garb and more readily perverted into shams, has more parasites than science. Nevertheless there is a rule whereby to detect the real artist. His tools are in his brain rather than his hands. His creed is in his work, not his cash-book. Having a detective taste for beauty in any guise, he accumulates artistic things even less as practical hints than as objects to be enjoyed. No matter how famous an artist is in type or lucky in "orders," unless he shows style in his work and taste in his home, he is no true man, but only a shrewd guller of the public. I would gladly omit all reference to fictitious work, for the same reason that I would not waste eyesight on it; but some examples will be needed to correct common misconceptions.

*Style, taste, definition of art.*

By style I mean more particularly that character given to the artist's work which comes of thought, whether new in conception and treatment, or the recasting of older ideas and forms into fresh life. The style of a school is an aggregation of the forces of its masters. In art, therefore, it is a positive, indispensable element, as character is, to manhood. Taste enters into style in the same way that polite manners help form the gentleman. There may be style with but little taste; still it is essential to complete work. By putting into harmony diverse forms and qualities, it acts as a barometer of art-feeling and intelligence. A man without taste is a mental cripple. His æsthetic faculty being unformed, he is virtually deaf and blind to the most refined pleasures of life.

No one will deny that the most intense and diffused of human joys spring from the passion of love. Without pretending to define art in precise terms, I venture to call it the love of the soul, in the sense that science is its law. As a civilizing process, each is the complement of the other. Practically, art is the ornamental side of life, as science is its utilitarian; the one having to do with the appearance of things, the other with their substance. Whatever is produced by man of which beauty is the main feature, and enjoyment the chief aim, that has its origin

in the art-idea; while things of simple use are the fruit of the opposite faculty. This is, however, only a superficial view. A more profound apprehension of their attributes makes science the representative of Divine Wisdom, and art the image of Divine Love; both bringing down to the level of our senses, by a sort of incarnation, the unseen and infinite.

*Realism and idealism. Generic motives.*

Two fundamental distinctions underlie art. I call them Realism and Idealism, from want of clearer words to express my meaning. The former applies to the portraiture of the external world, and partakes more or less of copying and imitation. It affects local and particular truths; is circumscribed in action and motive; inclines to inventories of things in its poorer estate; is apt to be cold, pedantic, minutely fine, or broadly rough; and seldom rises above consummate dexterity and intellectual appreciation.

Idealism bases itself on universal truths. It deals more with emotions and ideas than facts and action, opposing imagination to perception, on which realism chiefly rests. Inventing, suggesting, creating, the former is the poetry of fine art; the latter, its prose. How to combine perfect execution with profound thought, and while rendering temporal and special truths to endow them with the spirit of the ideal and eternal, is the great problem of art. Great artists ever struggle to solve it. But owing to the bias which the mind early takes for one or the other of these phases, and the limitations of their materials, few succeed in combining their best points.

The motives which determine the generic directions of art are of three kinds. They may be classed as follows, not to define a system, but only to aid in recognizing the dominant characteristics of an artist or period. In comprehending at a glance the ruling motive, and placing ourself in sympathy with it, we not only enjoy more heartily the artist's purpose, but quicker come to sound judgment. Hence any simple rules to aid the observation of the spectator are useful. With art, as with speech, misunderstandings arise by not promptly understanding what is meant.

These generic motives are, first, DECORATION; having for its object ornament, and addressing itself chiefly to the sensuous faculties. This is the most common, and enters largely into food, clothing, furniture, building, manufacture, and polite manners; in fine, into everything which besides its utility has scope for beauty.

Secondly, ILLUSTRATION; teaching, representation, preservation, and reminiscence under æsthetic forms being its chief aims. This includes more especially landscape, historical, and dramatic art, and portraiture, whether realistic or idealistic.

Thirdly, REVELATION, in the sense of invention, suggestion, creation, and discovery, inspired by the imagination. All supersensuous and supernal imagery that has no exact likeness to things in the world about us comes under this distinction. Its real mission is spiritual truth, but not unseldom it is prostituted to sensualism and diabolism, for it goes to either extreme just as it is controlled by a pure or a debauched mind.

Frequently the above distinctions commingle, but in general one of them marks the ruling thought. Art of itself is neither good nor evil, but passively obeys the human will, so that it affords a sure test of culture and morals, individually and nationally. I include in it polite literature, poetry, music, and the drama, because in each, as in painting and sculpture, either forms, colors, sounds, action, or thought are given under pleasurable combinations, and we are harmoniously let into the mysteries of nature, as Orpheus led the beasts, trees, and stones to follow him by the sweetness of his lyre. Whatever, therefore, has the power so to affect mankind, which is neither the direct product of pure reason or science, nor is the manifest form of nature itself, but suggests it or reveals the unseen in æsthetic guise, that is ART!

The hidden force of art lies in its kinship to our desires. It has affinities to satisfy every grade of intelligence and feeling. We may gauge our æsthetic fullness by the stages of enjoyment through which we go from a primary liking of a Carlo Dolce, Claude, or Boucher to an appreciation of Titian, Turner, or Leonardo; by preferring the profound thought of Michael Angelo to the sweeter compositions of Raphael, and lastly the mystic spirituality of Blake to the grotesque sensualism of Doré.

But appreciation is of slow growth. Shakespeare's plays would be jargon to a Hottentot, the music of Beethoven an unmeaning noise, and Buonarotti's "Night and Morning" rude idols. Art demands a nice discipline of eye and ear even to learn its alphabet. If we are to get out of it anything besides vague sensation, the physical organs must be trained to observe with exactitude, and the mental to discover its organic constitution, and to comprehend its philosophy. An experienced eye

is a bad critic, despite the often quoted story of the bird that pecked at the grapes of Zeuxis. I have known one fly into a room and try to sip honey from the wall-paper, not leaving it until it had tested each coarsely painted flower, and got well bruised for its stupidity. We must not estimate art by its effects on the uncultivated. Although in one sense an instinct, as science is a problem, few are born acutely sensible to its impressions, while every one has need of knowledge to justify his faith. The common eye sees skin-deep only into anything. Yet art discloses the soul of artist and spectator, and expands both if they but consent.

*First notions confused.*

Few take note of its capacity to promote domestic refinement and happiness in the arrangement of household effects in accordance with the laws of symmetry, proportion, and balance of parts; give heed to tone, harmony, and contrast in color, or obey that subtile dictation of taste which results, like concord in music, in an harmonious unity of variety. More money is spent in perpetuating ugliness or in crude work than would, if properly directed, secure to every town a free school of taste in its edifices and grounds. Peoples are educated to a disregard of æsthetic rules as palpable as would be the violation of those of grammar if all the schools taught cockney English. For three centuries the artistic instincts, so conspicuous in the classical and middle ages, have been remorsely degraded, until the feeling for color is well nigh lost, and the sense of the beautiful in form so obfuscated as to make homeliness appear to be the passionate choice of the nineteenth century.

Our first notions of science or art are confused and superficial. Intellect rises to the dignity of a judge only by severe study. Taste is not the spontaneous gift of Heaven, like Wisdom fully armed from the head of Jove. Our instincts may be radically pure or vicious, and aid or embarrass our progress, but taste itself is the result of the culture of the æsthetic faculties, as grammar is that of the rules of language. Training must therefore precede the comprehension as well as execution of fine art. It is a common fallacy that art has simply to please the spectator, its works being good or bad just as they affect him, whether he is qualified to judge or not. Besides taste, acquaintance with its history and philosophy is necessary to the critic. An artist may have excellent taste, and be wanting in the latter. Indeed, few artists outside of their own systems have shown themselves to be competent critics in art, or com-

plete in their work. In order to appreciate the entire functions, they must inform themselves of its moral and social aspects in all times, and the part it has filled in history. But with rare exceptions they devote themselves exclusively to its technical qualities, limiting their knowledge of these to their own period or special aim.

*Art knowledge.*

The importance of art as a vehicle of knowledge, is less appreciated, because its results are so common. But were all its representations of objects, deeds, and men, which are out of the range of our sight, obliterated, the most of the globe and its history would no more exist to our material senses than the scenery and affairs of other planets. As compared with form and color, words, in the mind's infancy, are but an imperfect means of conveying adequate notions of things. Art becomes an essential of education. Besides getting from it our first impressions of whatever we cannot see, we receive the primary lessons of a higher life than that of earth. Yet as regards instruction its office is only initial. The earliest alphabets were rude pictures or symbols. Before the mental sight is opened to distinguish, in the artificial signs we call letters, their hidden thought, our lessons are given either by the things themselves or their pictorial forms. Except as revelation, its highest function, it fulfills an inferior office compared with abstract science. To this it is what the body is to the spirit, an incarnation to meet the needs of the finite in man.

The natural world presents one aspect of divine teaching; art another. One is the sculpture, painting, music, and poetry of God; in fine, His mind let down to the level of our comprehension. Matter without spirit would be inert, soulless. There would be no God in it. So with art. The matter or vehicle must be impregnated with spirit, or the thought which gives its being. Otherwise, we get only the dead forms of things, which no more represent their life than clothing makes the man. Art is the means given him to embody his ideas of himself, the universe, and their Author. In the exercise of this indirect, creative faculty, the artist has delegated to him a divine function, to aid in training his fellow men for a more elevated existence. But few recognize their credentials or compel recognition of the world. Neither artist nor the world is yet ready for greatest art. The best we have is only a hint of what may come. It is a duty to cultivate the power of discerning eternal truths. Alas! the common practice is to seize hold of a farthing candle, and shout, Behold the sun!

The first interview with true art begets emotions not less spontaneous than those of the natural world, when we abandon ourselves with equal confidence to its influence. But it varies in character, because of its more direct appeal to the intellect, or to our sympathy with humanity. Nature incites to love and awe of a power past finding out, though within the scope of human enjoyment. Art talks the universal language of our species, and, being of man's invention, is on the level of his intelligence. While acknowledging its capacity, we comprehend its machinery. There is therefore in our delight always a mixture of the finite, which debars it from rivaling Nature's vision of the infinite in profundity of emotional power. She brings home to us our helplessness and consequent dependence on the mysterious Intelligence that guides matter. Art stimulates the faculties to a practical development. We criticise the artist from intellectual provocation. But we worship Nature, the teacher of art and image of the cause of all things. It is important to understand the distinction drawn between art, man's forms of matter, and nature, God's forms, because the distance between the two as regards tangible results must always be in the ratio of the originating force of the one and the imitative skill of the other. Any language used in trying to give just ideas of art must be construed in that secondary scale which art itself holds to Nature, and not as claiming it as a rival even when most asserting its spirituality. Nature is the fact itself; art the type of the fact.

On the other hand, beware of depreciating art overmuch in comparison with nature. It has its origin in mind, which is the divinest gift we yet know, and, when true, must reflect the paternal features. Furthermore, in our eagerness to realize our ideal, allowance must be made for those limitations which come of the intractability and decay of its vehicles, and its feebleness of execution and resources in contrast with nature. Such considerations will help to a right estimate of the difficulties of art and appreciation of its triumphs. We need not, however, refuse to test its power over the heart until we have canvassed its claims intellectually and technically. The first question is, What does the artist mean us to see, know, and feel? We owe it to him to get at once at his intent. He is most successful when we seize it spontaneously. In beginning with art, walk humbly. Like nature, it primarily addresses the emotions. Criticism is better deferred until we have learned something of ourselves through

the language that moves us. For our own habit of enjoyment it is well to be more alive to its merits than defects. Bad indeed must be the art that has no power to please. Its first and final test is its capacity to make us happy. The foundation of appreciation is soundest when regulated by morality cultivated to a keen sense of the beautiful. An abrupt introduction to vast galleries of painting and sculpture oppresses and confuses the mind. My own first experience was the Louvre. In the effort to maintain my mental equilibrium, I censured and eulogized in hot haste, hurrying from one object to another with delirious rapidity as if the whole were a bubble about to burst, until, with an aching brain and unmoved heart, I gladly escaped to the outer air for breath.

*Final test of art.*
*Ideas in art.*
*The world without beauty.*

Still, mistakes are our best teachers. Indeed, error is the guide-board of truth; for as we detect the false, we draw nigher to the eternal Right. What I have to say to-day, though not the wisest thought, is more matured than the one of yesterday. I say it, whether it coincides or not with a previous one, because it is the fruit of more study, and therefore likely to be wiser. The first steps of any progress are wearisome and disappointing. But in those of art Beauty is ever in view to tempt us on.

*Best teachers.*

In science ideas are first in sequence, and truth the object. Art reverses this. Ideas are not necessarily included, for much art has no other intent than sensuous enjoyment. In verity, this is its vital purpose; the one which inspires it to seek beauty as means and aim. All else we get from it is a collateral issue. Whenever it is limited to other ends, as to religion or mere narration, it loses somewhat of its true character. There is for it a higher office than teaching, noble as that is. It was sent to earth to adorn, charm, comfort, and rejoice human life, and with it came that intense love of beauty which both man and nature manifest, ever restless when deprived of its presence. If the world would be an intellectual blank from the loss of art as an illustrator and recorder, what a hideous prison would it be were beauty to be completely withdrawn from nature, and man have neither delight in God's work nor satisfaction in his own, because he could add no grace or dignity to what he creates for himself, or gladden it with color! Setting aside gallery painting and sculpture, which few peoples possess, we have only to conceive of common things stripped of whatever gives them lightness, delicacy, symmetry, brilliancy, of all that which, besides use,

renders them pleasing to the eye and suggestive to thought; and we can realize how much art does in the humblest ways to promote our happiness, and from this conceive of its capacity to brighten our existence, if we would allow it full expression in all the walks of life. The ugly utensil, a blank or vulgar in color, betokens a mind either rude or coarse, or with its brightest faculties obscured. No one who studies the natural world can fail to be persuaded of the intent of the Creator to make mankind happy through their instinctive capacities of enjoying what He has created. It is a religious duty to be happy. A large share of that duty should be exercised in carrying forward what God has begun, and making the earth more enjoyable in little things as well as large. He lavishly decorates the tiniest plant, and makes glad the minutest insect with a glory all its own. Man imitates this example as he feels his way towards civilization. He may be a cannibal, brutal and sanguinary, every-way; still the first dawn of intellect is shown in a craving for Decoration. This is the primary spiritual want, though complete refinement is the last stage of progress. Tattooing, staining, carving, and ornaments, precede clothing. However rude the lower classes of civilized nations, they betray amid their dirt and rags the same greed of beauty, quenched only in the lowest degradations. Therefore, the instinct given for a beneficent purpose, the finality of which I believe to be man's supreme felicity, or the consciousness of *being* good, proven by the perfect enjoyment of those qualities of forms and colors which in the soul's sight incarnate goodness, — this instinct cannot be too sedulously cultivated. But we are wise in our choice of beauty only after understanding its highest purpose. There is a conscience in art to be cultivated as in morals, by directing it to the pure, noble, and true. Different degrees and kinds of beauty call for corresponding differences of satisfaction. One object may be enjoyed for its special attractions, regardless of use or purpose; another for its perfect adaptation to its end, which may be common or even coarse, but ennobled by richness of decoration, as in some drinking-cups or tools; and others for their delicacy of hue and shape. Art always has its own sensuous language, irrespective of any higher meaning. All this is enjoyable in kind, but it is an error to stop at mere sensation. While allowing pleasurable emotions, that begin and end with our physical being, their free scope, we should look deeper into its mysteries until we come

*Decoration.*

*Conscience in Art. Dangers, inspiration, temptation.*

into the presence of the Holy One whence it comes, and be content only as it is illumined by the Divine Spirit.

I am emphatic in asserting the right and duty of man's enjoyment of art equally with nature, because of the fear which ascetic creeds put into timid consciences — a fear which deprives them of a precious gift of the Father, and deprives Him of the love which every true heart feels for the Author of its happiness. It is nothing to the point that the Christian ideal has not yet been attained. Art has suggested its final capacity by special successes on the sensuous, intellectual plane of the Grecian phase. As we advance the powers already manifested under various inspirations and among diverse races will be shown, so that some judgment may be formed of the limits of its attributes and functions, and their final standard of execution.

The appreciation of art spiritually, as with nature, ends in adoration, not in the garb of a ritual, but in a repose of mind that passeth description. Now enjoyment and worship become one. No one will accuse me of exalting enjoyment at the expense of morality, if he will reflect that between men the highest compliment that can pass is the enjoying of whatever love or friendship confers. Our keenest social happiness is based on this. Enlarge and exalt this feeling, as needs be done when we approach divinity, and the result is that perfect use and enjoyment of life which constitutes an homage alike worthy of man and his Maker.

Science, apart from its material mission by which it consents to be the servant of men, has a still nobler purpose, and talks face to face with spirit, disclosing its knowledge direct to mind itself. Unfolding the laws of being, it carries thought into the infinite, creating an inward art so perfect that objects fashioned by the hand become eloquent only as they express the abstract truths of science. The mind rejects as base or false all that the imagination would impose on it not consistent with the principles and facts manifested in the creation. As nature is God's art, so science is the disclosure of His soul, or that philosophy which, comprehending all knowledge, includes art as one of its phases. Art, to be effectual as a teacher, must be consistent with its own instructor. Otherwise it falls into isolated and inferior truths, and, being detached from great principles, perverts knowledge and corrupts feeling.

While, therefore, art is valuable as an elementary teacher by reason of its alliance with science, it exposes man to seductions

through the medium of his corporeal senses, on account of its greater affinity to feeling. In the degree that the soul is clouded by carnal desires, sensation and reason are developed in the direction of external life, seizing upon that as the chief object of pleasure and investigation. Ignoring the special purpose of gross matter and separating it from spirit, or viewing the phenomena of spirit only as those of matter, and calling it the only eternal thing, it becomes the ultimate good of existence. This is the chief danger of art, a snare to the undiscriminating; but its force and direction depend on the will. The chief obstacle to science is its inexorable demand upon pure reason, involving a systematic labor of thought which few are disposed to undertake. If art or science recognize the spirit's integuments as the only reality in life, disappointment and debasement are sure to ensue. On the other hand, in viewing forms as the outgrowth of spirit and subjecting the outer fact to the inner principle, we approach more nearly to the sources of truth and beauty.

In one sense all truth comes of suggestion; so too, all falsehood. One is called inspiration, the other temptation. Whence and how ideas come and go no man may now tell. Yet these laws which seem so obscure will in the light of future life become as clear as is gravitation in the present. We may expect to discover the principles and laws of our being, but not the source of being itself, which all mankind spontaneously resolve into the indefinable proposition, GOD. In this all must rest. But while the essence of life is so mysterious that Jesus compared it to the coming and going of the wind, yet it is palpable to all that the quality and direction of the thought depends on our will. God does not force Himself on reluctant minds, or charge their faculties with ideas disproportioned to their forces; but as they labor for good or evil, thoughts and feelings correspond, as one flower attracts poison from the atmosphere and another fragrance. Our minds are thus inspired, receiving from the unseen a spiritual nutriment, which strengthens them in the way their desires lead. With some, thought comes orderly and with measured progress. These are our sages and men of science. In others it springs up in wild exuberance from wayside seeds: great truths amid rank errors; noble aspiration chained to vehement passion; beauty in bondage to matter. So inspired, speaks the artist, the poet, and the seer.

While art should be earnest and impassioned, manifesting

clearly its motives, no less should it be scientifically correct in execution, and as a whole, clearly and harmoniously express its meaning and functions. In this way feeling and reason are made to accord, unity is obtained, and truth in the garb of beauty becomes doubly welcome.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS IDEA IN ART.

*Religious and æsthetic ideas.*

ALTHOUGH religious and æsthetic ideas are distinct, art has been so closely associated with religions in early history, that they must be spoken of almost as one. In incipient civilizations the religious sentiment controlled the imagination, and made of art a mere instrument to give shape to its beliefs. Hence we invariably find it in this stage of human progress more intent on expressing the symbolism of the popular faiths than asserting its own æsthetic laws.

A desire to personify the unseen intelligence which governs the world, joined to the instinct of ideal beauty, gave birth to sculpture. Painting, at first, was only an accessory, and more as a type than as ornament. In Egypt and India the art-idea was wholly dominated by the theological, which gave to its enigmatical idols rigid and fixed forms as unchangeable as the beings they symbolized. The intent was to impress the beholder with awe and reverence of divine and earthly rulers, and to add to their mystery and splendor. King, priest, and god then were almost synonymous terms, the god often being a deified hero. Judging from the massive largeness and unimpassioned features of Egyptian deities, art intended them for kindly, protective, self-satisfied beings, unmoved by the vagaries so common among their Grecian fellows. In serene repose they look down with a benignant smile on the world at their feet.

*Sculpture.*

Assyrian art was allied to the Egyptian in mystic grandeur of symbolism, but was more particularly devoted to the deification of the living ruler. The art of both peoples as well as that of contemporary India, not being based on æsthetic principles, is interesting only in an historical or hierarchal view. India still clings to her fantastic, extravagant symbolism; to the initiated a personification of its religious philosophy, but to the masses an idolatry, but one remove from fetichism. And in China and Japan religious art offers no better aspect. It is an

exhibition of the diabolism of theology, in shapes such as imaginations steeped in superstitious fears conceive. Doubtless much of this horrid imagery is due to an incapacity of apprehending the beautiful in the highest forms of art; while this incapacity is largely the result of a base theology, and not of any organic mental defect; for both races show acute perceptions and keen instincts in ornamentation. But the effect of their religious art has been to enslave the minds of those that enslaved it, and to put a bar to their civilization. Without this false art it is inconceivable that the East should have remained so long in intellectual and religious stagnation. Moses, and subsequently Mohammed, took note of the misuse of art and prohibited its practice. But their disregard of its right functions left their followers in a condition scarcely better than that which was the result of the opposite extreme. One-sidedness in any direction hinders the development of civilization, but the perversion of art into idolatry most of all. It then assumes abortive, grotesque, and monstrous shapes, or lapses into sensuality and superstition, converting worship into a pageant which takes the likeness of the ignorance and wickedness that dwarfs and poisons the art that is given to the people at large. Still as each man contains the germ of a perfect development, so every race has its exceptional wise men who save their countrymen from being left in utter darkness. There is no national art, however degraded, which does not show some evidence of an aspiration for eternal truth and beauty.

Reluctant to embody their notions of divine things, the Hebrew legislators so quenched the artistic feeling of the Jews, that Solomon, too wise to be a bigot, was obliged to apply to the Tyrians for common artificers to decorate his temple, as later Herod did to Greek workmen, when he undertook its restoration. But even the restricted latitude of decoration which these kings gave to sacred architecture, was repudiated by Protestant sects in their interpretation of the code of Moses. The proscription of idolatrous images was construed as extending to all art, which was regarded as a device of Satan to ensnare souls. Thus a large fraction of modern civilization came to be stripped of half of its legitimate happiness, because idolatrous Orientals had divorced art from intellectual freedom and made it subservient either to sensuality or despotism. No doubt it was an evil in such hands, but the fault was not in itself, any more than printing is to blame because unscrupulous writers pervert its capacity of good into the bad.

We must look to Greece for the first development of art on a purely æsthetic foundation. Here I would observe that the word æsthetic implies the observation and detection of the ugly or homely, as well as a knowledge of the beautiful. Indeed, there can be no proper understanding of the one without the other, as everything within the range of human capacity must be in its nature relative, not supreme truth. Therefore this term, which originated in Greece, means in the sense I shall use it, whatever helps us to perceive, understand, and enjoy the beautiful, and includes both the science and philosophy of the accompanying sensations. No other word so comprehensively and yet so particularly applies to my topic; but it is one which is often accepted either in too restricted or too vague a sense.

*Meaning of æsthetic. Symbolism*

Greece also had its symbolical creations which resembled nothing on earth, whatever the religious imagination might conceive as existing beyond, or as requisite to embody the sacred mysteries. Some of its figures were as strange and graceless as those of India. Indeed, both Asia and Egypt, on account of their superior civilizations, exercised a direct influence over the primitive art of Greece, as well as that of Italy. Viewed as art Diana of Ephesus is a grotesque monster. Chimeras, three-eyed, double-headed, and hundred-armed statues are analogous to oriental image-mysticism. But in its fauni, satyrs, nereids, and kindred creations, we perceive the growing ascendency of the natural and beautiful, holding the symbolical in restraint, until art finally emancipates itself from servitude to the theological idea, and occupies an independent position. In some sense art and religion remained one, for the highest efforts of the former were bestowed on the mythology of the country. The artistic mind, freed from being the mouthpiece of a rigid creed, infused new light and life into religion itself. Creating a new and more refined art, based on the facts of nature, and made beautiful by poetical thought, the sculptured gods, while emblematic of spiritual aspirations to the philosophic mind, were brought nearer to the sympathies and comprehension of the masses. The *word* was made flesh in an æsthetic sense, as later under the Christian revelation it assumed the ascetic shape. Grecian art was the offspring of the newly emancipated intellect and imagination inspired by the homage paid to beauty. Both it and the mythology were based on an ideal standard of humanity, aiming at the godlike in functions and expression, by the elim-

ination of material weakness or signs of imperfection and decay, and in the personification of the phenomena of nature as interpreted by the poetical faculty; not to produce grotesque and uncouth symbols like the Asiatic, but taking their clue from the beautiful in the visible creature, and exalting it by the joint force of science and imagination into the highest conceivable types of beauty and fullness of meaning in harmony with their faith.

The foundation of the earliest religions was either in external nature the effect suggesting a cause, or in the disposition of man to repeat his own nature with superhuman attributes. This tended to a prolific mythology, which in turn generated a fruitful art. So fixed in mental childhood is the desire to personify objects of belief, that even the Jews repeatedly relapsed into idol-worship. In the main, however, they were the Puritans of antiquity; as the Egyptians may be said to have shown in their priestly assumption, flexibility of action, and unchangeableness of dogma, the likeness of Romanism; while the Greeks more resembled those nations of our time that have substituted civil liberty for church-government. Inspired by philosophy, they opened their minds to the widest ranges of thought and imagination, and borrowing from the learning and experience of all nations, their wisdom culminated in Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato, and their art in Homer, Æschylus, Phidias, and Apelles.

*Aim of Grecian art. Muse of Cortona. Encaustic painting.*

Although beauty was the aim of Greek art, it was not left to the dubious guidance of feeling, but subjected so skillfully to science, that their best work makes us forget art in its seeming naturalness. Whether their painting was on a par with their sculpture is a mooted question. Doubtless it was subjected to similar rules. If an isolated specimen can afford sufficient proof of their equality, the so-called "Muse of Cortona" offers that evidence.

The "Muse" is one of those rare surprises which make the mind realize the meaning of the poet's "joy forever." As the traveller is whirled over the iron road that now bisects the Val di Chiana in Central Italy, his eyes fastened on Lake Thrasymene, thinking perhaps of Hannibal's victory, he gives small heed to the grim hill-town on his left, looking more like a den of thieves than the home of the fairest relic of Grecian painting that time has kept for us.

If he fail to alight and mount that long hill he will miss a sight such as Europe cannot elsewhere offer. It is a sensation in itself approaching awe to be within walls which were ancient before Troy was taken, and whose massive stones, capped by the lighter structures of mediæval times, still girdle the town, retaining the same gateways through which for more than three thousand years the human tide of Cortona has ebbed and flowed: glum arches, commanding vistas of plain, mountain, lake, far-off towered towns, castles, pagan and Christian fanes and battle-fields, for which Pelasgian, Etruscan, Carthaginian, Roman, Guelph, and Ghibelline, Pope and Italian, by turns have fought, through the vicissitudes of a history whose light fades away in myths coeval with man's first appearance on earth.

Cortona is so shrunken internally that one quarter of the space within the walls is filled with ruins or restored to agriculture; another quarter is taken up by narrow, foot-wrenching streets, the grime of whose deep-browed houses makes a background of mysterious obscurity, like their own history, and which requires all the intensity of Italian sunlight to enliven for a fleeting moment. The remainder of the town fits well enough into modern life without detriment to its ancient genealogy.

The only existing example of Grecian easel-painting, is kept in a little cabinet in the Museum. When opened, the sight transports a visitor back to its best period. He sees the head and bust of a young girl, one third life-size, holding a lyre, painted in a wax medium on a fragment of slate. It was found in the last century by a peasant, in the earth of his farm. Supposing it to be a votive Madonna, he gave it an honorable position in his cottage; but when told by a priest that it was an idol, he used the slate to stop a hole in his oven. In this position it was discovered and taken possession of by his landlord, and after various adventures, was given to the Museum by the same person who presented its other unique treasure, the famous Etruscan lamp of bronze.

There are sundry abrasions, and some loss of shadow and gradation of tints, but these injuries are slight. Indeed, compared with most paintings of the best Italian period, it is so sound as to offer an argument in favor of the vehicles used and the substance on which it is painted. At first glance its statuesque projection is very remarkable. Evidently it was painted by one trained to the practice of Zeuxis, of modelling his figures

in terra-cotta before painting them. No modern painting that I have seen on similar material gives other effect than a flat and reflecting surface. This is surrounded by atmosphere. The eye reposes on a transparent, harmonious, grayish purple ether, in the midst of which stands a low-browed girl, just bloomed into womanhood, not idealized into monotonous regularity of outline, but with the freshness, variety, and flexibility of modelling united into an expressive whole, such as is seen only in the finest living examples.

Masses of golden brown hair fall over the shoulders and stray in delicate lines to the front, intermingling on the brow with a laurel wreath. The right bosom, of virgin form and tint, is exposed. A transparent drapery heightens the effect of the soft carnation of the left shoulder and the delicate flesh of the other bosom, whose sweet beauty it modestly veils. Drooping eyes give a vestal look to features the intelligence of which corresponds to their comeliness. It seems spiritually super-sensuous; what the Venus di Milo must have been in early girlhood, with the possibilities of the goddess-mother nascent in her; in fine, a handsome, healthful child of earth, whose pure instincts are as yet untested by worldly life, leaving the beholder in rapt admiration of the lovely being before him, while undetermined as to her destiny. She might become a Sappho, an Aspasia, or a Cornelia; no matter which! There she stands more like life than any female figure I can recall of the "old masters" or of recent painters. In some technical details the best of them may have done some things superior to points of execution in this picture. But the "Muse" combines that perfect adaptation of color with form which best expresses the complete science and inspiration of art. And this excellence is as much owing to color as to design. There appears to be a slight elongation of the neck, perhaps done to give a better effect in the position that the painter intended his work should be seen. Æsthetic law admits local falsehood in order to attain greater general truth, in the sense that all art is not the truth but its effigy. A photograph which is popularly supposed to render the exact fact, does so at only one point. All the rest is diminished or exaggerated as it recedes from it. An artist, therefore, is often obliged to adroitly avoid exactness in detail in order to secure unity in the mass at the prescribed point of view.

The coloring of the "Muse" is solid, broad, and emphatic, with fine gradation of tone, and a force of *chiaro-oscuro* that re-

calls Leonardo. Indeed the picture is a happy exemplification of his axioms. It affects the senses like enchanting music. A large sum has been offered for it by the agent of a foreign museum, but as it was given on condition of being perpetually kept at Cortona, this isolated city is likely to always possess the sole extant proof of the equality of Greek painting to its sculpture. It is a mere fragment, and may not be an example of the best antique execution. Had we those master-pieces of which such fabulous statements have come down to us, we might have a clearer standard by which to adjudicate the relative merits of classical and christian painting. The "Muse" has those qualities which the best Italian masters have ever sought, and which French art tries to realize. Painted in the encaustic method, which was adopted in remote antiquity, it resists time and humidity better than any other. The Byzantines adopted it from the old and transmitted it, in a modified manner, to the modern Greeks and to the Russians. There exist pictures, done in this way eight centuries ago, perfect now. Pliny says this system was in vogue before the epoch of Aristides. It is conjectured that the colors were boiled with wax, into which a light dose of oil was infused. The prices paid Zeuxis, Parrhasius, and Apelles exceeded even modern prodigality, and indicate the esteem in which they were held. Lucullus gave several thousand dollars for a copy of a portrait of Glycére seated with a crown of flowers in her hand. Nicias refused upward of one hundred thousand dollars of our money, for a painting of the "Descent of Ulysses into Hell," preferring to give it to Athens his birth-place. Julius Cæsar paid nearly two hundred thousand dollars for two pictures of Ajax and Médea. The fees given by pupils to the great masters were enormous, but the course of study in their studios was thorough. Protogenes worked seven years on his picture of the hunter Jalysus. We cite Leonardo's four years' work on the "Jaconda" as a wonder of patient elaboration. Four centuries have robbed it of its finest qualities, while after the lapse of more than twenty, the "Muse" retains hers — a striking contrast to the rapid destructibility or deterioration of modern pigments.

The type and treatment of the "Muse" are Grecian, but there is also about it a certain expression that indicates study from nature, after the manner of the Etruscans, and renders it a happy example of the merits of both schools. Once I should have maintained that it was an ideal head of the classical model. But

a recent experience had proved to me that the highest idealism of art is at times excelled by nature herself, and that however much the artist may labor to perfect beauty as a whole, he will, perhaps, where he least expects to, find a complete model fitted to his loftiest aspirations.

A few days before seeing the "Muse" I had met in Perugia so beautiful a peasant girl that her memory has haunted me ever since. Her brow was low, hair luxuriant, eyebrows dark, long, and finely pencilled, eyes large, deep-set, and lustrous, of the richest brown, the nose chiselled as for a Diana, and the mouth and chin indicating a fine temperament and those qualities most desirable in woman. The complexion showed a warm carnation in a transparent, delicate olive, as would appear the blood of the south seen though the fairest skin of the north. Her figure was almost heroic in size and shape, and her untutored manners and speech such as the best-bred lady might covet.

Here then was the original of the "Muse." Some sister of hers two thousand years before had been seen and painted for our benefit by an appreciating artist, little dreaming of an admiring critic from a then unheard-of world, who would now gratefully perpetuate his name if he could.

*Raphael's theory of ideals.*

Raphael writes, in explanation of his ideals, "I find the best form I can in nature and then avail myself of certain ideas which come into my mind," adding, beautiful women are scarce, and it was necessary to see many in order to select parts to fit into a perfect whole. This theory of selection differs from the Greek principle, which was rather to create anew the beautiful as an organic whole, instead of forming it out of disconnected parts. When either has done its best, and we are tempted to adore the art, nature steps in and discloses a divine art, which puts man's to the blush. The adoring eyes of Raphael's boy-angels in the Madonna del Sisto, look as if borrowed from a celestial sphere. But in an out of the way valley in the province of Lucca, I found the originals, dirty and timid, of those fair-haired, prophet-eyed children. They are the rarest of the types of infantile beauty, but the difference between the artistic and the common eye, is, that to the former a transient glance at the beautiful becomes at once a divine revelation, while to the other nothing is disclosed but an unheeded fact.

Not long before in the neighboring mountains, I had met a lithe strong-limbed peasant girl gracefully poising a copper vase full of water on her head, supported by one hand, the other up-

raised in an heroic attitude, encouraging a cow to ascend the stone steps which led up the hill. Her pose and action were an inspiration for an artist, heightened as their effect was by the simple elegance of the folds of her coarse drapery, her fine, healthful figure, and the clear ring of her voice as she sang encouraging words to her charge. Immediately there was revealed, whence and how the ancients got their motives and models for bronzes and pottery.

Nature's best lessons are rare, but once given to the detective eyes of art, they last decades of centuries to cheer and delight those who otherwise might be blind both to nature and art. Keep in mind that all art in manifesting the sublime and beautiful, is only recording the progress of man in detecting their spirit and forms in creation.

That the beauty and freedom of Grecian art were due to the native genius, is proven by the early examples of sculpture. One of the more remarkable is a bas-relief of Leucotea, Bacchus, and Ninfé, at Rome. We note the dawning emancipation of Greek from Egyptian art, in an attempt to adapt the still rigid attitudes, bound limbs, and imposing formalism of the latter — which is best expressed by the kindred qualities of granite, porphyry, and similar minerals, and owes its character as much to their color as to form — to the more perfect uses of marble, its greater flexibility and capacity of expression. Later we perceive the reflex influence of the Greek on its first teacher, in statues like the Egyptian Apollo, which combines characteristics of both schools. The god now walks, for his legs are unbound, but retains the severe simplicity of his African constitution, exhibiting superhuman strength joined to classical purity of form and refinement of character.

In freeing himself from the prominent characteristics of the Nilotic school, its stereotyped expression and preponderance of matter as size, weight, and strength, immobility and endurance, the Grecian not only emancipated art from sacerdotal tyranny, but showed that an era of individual liberty had dawned on the world. Egyptian artists were held in the same bondage as their profession, being looked upon as image-cutters or painters of the lowest castes, whose craft by law passed from father to son. Yet the art of Egypt atones in some degree for its lack of freedom, by that mysterious sublimity which came from a broad and majestic treatment of its imperishable materials, and the use of colors solely in a conventional or symbolical sense; both sculp-

ture and painting being subservient to a gigantic architecture which seems to be the image of Eternity looking down on Time.

Doubtless the Egyptian idol was shorn of much of divinity to the common mind, by innovations of Grecian origin, but to the more cultivated race Apollo emerged from bondage had become truly a god. The spirit of Egyptian art was formal and unvaried from theological pressure; of the Greek free and changeable on account of the nature of its mythology. It rejoiced in sensuous life, and put no more restraint on the artist than on the god, whose latitude of action was the standard also of man in his pursuit of happiness, though inferior in degree. The art of each nation is a picture of the effect of its faith on the national life. In this light it becomes instructive to compare one with another. But it is impossible for us to look on a defunct art, as did its contemporaries; to them it was both faith and beauty. The former we can appreciate only as we do fossils, which tell the age and condition of the planet in its different geological epochs. Nature does not repeat herself after finishing her work, whether mental or physical. Any art not based on our own plane of instruction or feeling, loses its primary significance. But the laws of beauty being fundamental and universal, if understood, we can judge and enjoy art in their light, even when not clearly comprehending its informing motive.

As every Greek was a latent god, so his art embodies its ideal. Ours is a back view, and none but scholars can interpret its highest thoughts. But so far as it goes, in its relation to our common humanity and nature at large, it is complete and consistent. In the degree that we arrive at an understanding of its motives they appear so harmoniously beautiful, that we readily fall into sympathy with them. We may not believe in a nature peopled by countless divinities, or raise our imaginations to that poetical height, which by means of ingenious myths and fables, brought home to Grecian minds deep moral and physical truths; still we can appreciate the feeling that led them to see a god in each of the phenomena of the natural world, and to devote their powers to making the Unseen familiar to men in general.

For a time only did the Greek artist work in conformity to pantheistic ideas, stimulated by a religious fervor, directed by, more than directing, his æsthetic judgment. Then arose a philosophical reaction, which, reversing the popular opinion, saw in symbols and dogmas merely the living of transitory ideas, and by

the path of infidelity sought a way to higher truths. The philosophy of an epoch, however, never represents the common thought; it simply affirms its possibilities. Therefore, in generalizing epochs, the common mind is the main fact. The religious, artistic life of Greece was the final stage of progress possible to evolve out of its sensuous faith, while the development of its infidel philosophy contributed largely to that new phase of civilization, which was born of the semi-barbarous Jews, and planting itself firmly on monotheism, finally supplanted polytheism as the controlling agent of human progress.

*Judæa supplants Greece.*

Judæa, therefore, succeeding Greece as the instructor of religions, substituted one God for a legion of deities. In the struggle of the opposing ideas, Greek art shared the fate of its faith. The inherent vice of polytheism after it had spent its force, shewed itself in art, in the exaltation of the sensual over the intellectual; base forms of ornament taking the place of higher motives, until taste was finally lost in ignorance and low desire. Not only were temple and statue degraded and ultimately destroyed, but mind itself, as regarded art, relapsed into a barbarism almost as rude as that from which it had emerged, less than a thousand years before. Art had to begin a new career from a fresh starting-point. Just as at first, the departed civilization had made of it a facile instrument to symbolize and spread its faith, so did its Christian successor. In everything it was subordinated to the new religion. Byzantine thought became completely dogmatized. Wars and politics hinged on creeds. Even when art was used simply as ornament, it displayed a mystical and sacred character. Unfortunately the spirit and words of the founder of Christianity were so interpreted as to provoke subtle controversy, and excite fanatical passions instead of to regenerate the heart and to enlighten the mind. Hence a blight came upon art in the outset of its new life.

It was during the strifes that accompanied the transition period of the rival faith, and the wars that were occasioned by the gradual dissolution of the Roman empire, that all art of classical origin went to decay; the more quickly and thoroughly because of the sensuality into which it had sunk. A vast amount of prurient examples, characteristic of the final state of pagan civilization, have been disinterred in Campania and elsewhere. These are now kept from the public, though they were once displayed without shame; and no doubt were as fruitful a cause as an effect of heathen immorality. Indeed the current ideas and habits

of the Latin races as regards modesty and chastity may be traced back to the free exhibition of an art which has not altogether lost its influence, although permitted to enter no households or appear in the streets. All of these objects, however, did not originate in a libidinous art. In its primitive aspects the worship of Venus or Bacchus was not a scandalous display of debauchery. Among the ancients generation had a sacred significance. Acts and objects which present morality condemns in public were then held in esteem as emblematical of divine mysteries. Some of the ancient emblems still survive in form though not in meaning. To us the obelisk is only a tall and comely shaft of stone. In antiquity it was the sacred *phallus*, the sun's prolific ray, a pole and spindle of the sky, eloquent in symbolism. The cross originally was significant of physical sources of human life, or of life itself; now it has risen to the higher use of the symbol of the soul's salvation. Examples of this nature teach that the obsolete or condemned fact of to-day was the vital truth of yesterday. A *phallus* was seen or worn by refined women of antiquity without the shame which would now attend its exposure in the lowest of the sex. Romanism replaced it as a symbol by that crucifix which the Puritan regards as idolatrous, though to his neighbor it speaks only of holiness. The beetle is not an attractive insect in looks or habits. Yet by the ladies of Egypt and Etruria, in the shape of the *scarabeus*, it was viewed as the image of the original creative power, because it forms a ball of earth with its hind legs, in which it deposits its eggs; the action being considered emblematic of the world as imbued with the divine instinct or influence. They considered it as sacred as modern devotees do the crucifix. Like this talisman, it was a protective charm, having engraved on it the effigy of their *Lar*, or protecting deity; sometimes that of an evil genius, to deprecate its power; the uglier the figure, the safer the wearer. In time the cross will take its place in museums by the side of the scarabeus.

Doubtless every cherished object had its origin in some legitimate sentiment or want. But sacred images, after long use, lose their spiritual efficacy, and become instrumental in degrading the mind. We see clearly that this is the case as regards the old mythology. The image-worship of Romanism is passing into a like phase. In its turn this will be set aside for a more rational ritual, and its art, like the defunct pagan, be gathered into museums and galleries. What now concerns my topic is to note

the immediate effect of the overturning of paganism by Christianity.

Everything of the past being viewed with suspicion, art shared the disgrace. Still, as it was necessary to reach the minds of the people in some intelligible and attractive way, the new priesthood did precisely what their condemned predecessors had done when in power. They seized on art, and set it vigorously at work to illustrate dogmas and extend authority. During the thousand years that they controlled it, art was as cramped in expression and stationary in condition as it had ever been among the Orientals from a similar cause. Architecture in some degree escaped; its necessities at times giving genius a more ample scope of execution than was permitted to sculpture or painting by themselves. But the chief features of the new-born or long dead art — for during this period it is difficult to draw the line between the last touches of pagan styles and the fresh ones of Christian hands as concerns execution — were ignorance and immobility; its main object to delineate the legends and doctrines of the new church in rude and striking designs of almost childish simplicity of composition; and its tendency to multiply objects of superstitious worship, disguising numberless pagan ideas and habits under new names. Being thus violently severed from the intellectual freedom which had made it so estimable in Greece, art was thrown back to its infancy in point of science. It swayed the human mind less as art than as symbolism and idolatry, in either of which its influence is more profound than in its own right, from its being made an exponent of the most awful motives that can affect humanity. But this influence depends on the ignorance of the spectator. In its grossest form it shows itself as fétichism; in a little higher stage it substitutes external rites and images for inward godliness; while in both aspects it appeals to the lowest intelligence, or to that sophistry which looks on matter as its god. The power over the ignorant mind is in the ratio of its actual rudeness or hideousness, the favorite idols of all pagan nations competing in this respect, as among Catholics the most sacred pictures are invariably the most primitive and ugly, like the black virgins ascribed to St. Luke. It really seems as if an irrevocable law compels art, when prostituted to bigotry and untruth, to assume effigies corresponding to these motives: just as when animated by truth and freedom, it embodies their forms. It will be instructive to contrast classical and Christian art as inspired by their diverging motives.

The Grecian artist was impelled both by his æsthetic knowledge and sensuous creed to aim at expressing the highest conceivable beauty. Not only his execution must be perfect, but his choice and treatment agreeable or noble. In form, pose, action, drapery, and color; in the rendering of passion and even pain; in short, in whatever he did, he was required by the public taste, and at Thebes by statute, to avoid the ugly, depraved, and ignoble. The aim was to exalt humanity by keeping in view its finest aspects. Prizes were given to handsome men and women in public competition as models of physical perfection. Beauty actually conferred historical fame when associated with mental gifts. Indeed, the fact and theory of complete beauty usually are in accord in that respect. Gerome has made familiar the story of the courtesan Phryne, the abrupt exposure of whose charms by her advocate to an Athenian court caused her acquittal of the charge of impiety, an accusation, as the case of Socrates shows, likely to have had a fatal ending. But that beauty might outweigh justice was nothing strange in the race to which it appealed.

*What was required of the pagan artist. False art of antiquity.*

The Greeks believed that beautiful objects fostered and raised the standard of beauty, and even imparted their formative magnetism to unborn children through their impressible mothers. Their joyous games were an incentive to manly strength, womanly grace, and general elegance. Those of the Romans begot a lust of blood and cruelty. While the Greeks grew to be humane and refined, their ambitious neighbors became fierce and rude. Next to the moral discipline of Christian ethics as a cogent refiner of peoples, comes the Grecian passion for beauty. Winckelman says that the Arcadians, being compelled to study music in order to soften their manners, changed from the most morose and worst behaved to the most honest and urbane of the Greeks.

There were exceptions to this heroic idealism of art, forming a low school, whose disciples were nicknamed, on account of their common and morbid motives, "artists of filth." Aristotle advised parents not to show the pictures of one Pyrecius to the young, lest their imaginations be soiled by his ugly images. Exaggeration and caricature were condemned, as was also vulgar artifice or any trickery to please the ignorant. Indeed, Grecian art addressed itself to a national taste which was the fruit of long experience and careful investigation of its funda-

mental laws. Its beginnings were simple and crude. The earliest statues were built up of different materials, the more precious being used for the extremities. At times they were painted to represent dress, and even clothed or bedizened with finery and jewels, — practices still in vogue among image-worshippers everywhere.

Abundance of bad and false art has come down from antiquity, much of which no doubt was only intended for cheap outdoor ornamentation, or is the product of its decline. Freaks, too, it had of gilding and coloring, but with what local reason, or on what æsthetic principle, it is impossible now to decide. The attempt to combine hues and forms under conflicting motives and conditions, produces antagonistic effects, and seems contrary to the canons of taste. For evidence, place a wax image beside a bronze or marble bust of the same person, and then say whether the precise imitation of complexion and shape of the emotionless waxen effigy is preferable to the uncolored mind-rendering material! Any artifice applied to pure sculpture — which relies on form alone for its power — detracts from its spiritual significance. Marble loses even by excessive polish or finish, though less than by tinting to give it the look of flesh, or of painting and gilding accessories to make them seem real. Its supremacy as an art-vehicle is shaken whenever its purity of colorless outline is disturbed. A combination of various marbles and stones in the same statue, as in the "Apollo" at Naples, whose head, hands, and lyre are of white marble, and the drapery of porphyry, destroys that unity which is essential to the perfect expression of the fundamental thought. The eye is attracted chiefly to the details, and the mind left in wonderment at the ingenuity of the labor rather than edified by the idea. In the worst period of antique sculpture, glass and ivory eyes, inlaid lips, and similar abortive means of representing life were rife, but their effect is as ghastly as rouge on the cheeks of a corpse. It is a causeless falsehood, which deceives none and shocks all. Vulgar art met with no permanent favor in Greece. Such specimens as exist are to be attributed to the caprices of patrons or special exigencies. The famous colossal gold and ivory statues of Jupiter and Minerva by Phidias were made in compliance with the popular religious sentiment, which exacted that its favorite deities should be constructed of the richest materials by the hands of the greatest artist. Elaborate skill and taste were displayed in their details, and the effect as

a whole must have been ornately magnificent, at the expense of the simpler and grander qualities of sculpture. Even the Apollo made of dark green basalt, however good otherwise, disappoints in its bad choice of a material for the god of light.

Undoubtedly the origin of polychromy is to be traced among the Greeks as the Egyptians to the sacred significance given to colors by the priests, while its use as ornament was continued after its force as an emblem had been weakened or lost. That it was largely employed in connection with gilding, sometimes actually covering the entire statue with paint, at others as a background or for emphasizing accessories, and with rich effect, there is ample evidence; but how to distinguish between its use in a typical or an æsthetic light, we cannot now exactly tell, though it is evident that both might be, and no doubt often were, put into harmony, to their mutual gain.

*Athlete of the Vatican, and other examples.*

The ability with which the Grecian sculptor was able to dignify an act in itself ignoble, is displayed in the "Lysippus," or "Athlete of the Vatican." He is represented scraping the sweat from his arm, but the faultless anatomy, the elastic pose, and quiet consciousness of health and power, suggest in the classical sense the "godlike." Much of the value of the "Modesty" in the same room depends upon its simplicity of treatment, especially in the chaste arrangement of the drapery and the perfect repose of the figure. So, too, in the "Silence" of the Capitol, note how by subtlety of attitude it impresses its motive in the spectator! In these examples we perceive the same consummate skill displayed in their secondary as well as primary objects; putting all parts into harmony, and thus making that complete unity which gives the highest character to the artist's work. Even in their departures from the heroic style into what approaches the modern realistic, an equal thoroughness obtains. Nothing is left to chance or the ignorance of the public, for the intended effect. An old woman is rendered with pitiless fidelity of decrepitude and countenance of crime or despair, as well as a drunken female of the same museum, with a no less forcible exhibition of her condition. In the representation of animal life, or appeals to sympathy, the Greek sculptor also worked as knowingly and well.

There is a bust of Æsop in the Villa Albani at Rome, the dwarfish ugliness of which agrees with the common notion of his features. But as statue-portraiture began about the time of Alexander the Great, its authenticity is questionable. It is in-

teresting, however, as showing a disposition at an early period to give realistic likenesses. If these were wanting, the Greeks created effigies of Homer, the Seven Sages, and other eminent men on the same idealistic principle that Christian art did subsequently of Christ, the Saints, and Apostles. In some cases there must have been traditions which served as a general guide, but as with the Saviour, St. Peter, and St. John, these traditions may have been as apocryphal as the likenesses based on them. The principle involved in the antique imaginary portraiture, being the very essence of idealistic art, makes it worth our while to consider it.

Its object was the exaltation of the intellectual over the mere physical, though keeping them in harmony, forming a heroic or generic type, indicative of the highest qualities of the personages represented. By this theory the mind is viewed as the permanent faculty, and the body the transitory feature of life. What is lost in outward accuracy of changeable form is gained in a knowledge of the never dying mental characteristics. This idealism is compatible with realistic truth, for it teaches the artist to overlook the trivial and unimportant both of spirit and matter, and to choose only that of each which best expresses the finest qualities of the individual in question. Titian, Velasquez, Veronese, Holbein, Leonardo, and Raphael were masters of this practice. I believe that the Greeks must have been equally skillful in refining their actual portraiture, as they are superior to others in creating one purely imaginary. We now see, especially on gems and medals, sometimes in sculpture, their philosophers and heroes as they appeared to the appreciative minds of their own race long after all personal knowledge of them had passed into the shadows of history. Lysippus epitomizes the theory when he says, "The older artists made men as they are; I, as they appeared to be." Their best is put into spiritual sympathy with the spectator's best opinion of them. It is not necessary that the idealism should be one of abstract beauty, but it must give the most noteworthy characteristics of a great man in an adequate shape. Contrast the ideal heads of Plato, Christ, or St. John of the Greek and Italian schools, with the most elaborated portraiture in the naturalistic method of the best German and Dutch masters, and decide which is the nobler style!

Roman portraiture was hard and literal, disguising no unwelcome truth, but reproducing the exact thing, be it a squint, mole, or bald head. Not even Julius Cæsar's power could pro-

tect him from its matter-of-fact practice. This characteristic of the seven-hilled civilization was inherited from the Etruscans, whose intellectual standard was lower than the Greeks. Roman physiognomy is coarse and almost brutal in comparison with Grecian. The busts of their public men indicate a predominance of animal force and strength of will. Few display much mental refinement or evidence of a fine intellectual temperament. Many of the emperors are only gladiators in purple. Those, like Marcus Aurelius and the Antonines, who display superior qualities, formed their characters by the study of Grecian philosophy. The realistic portraiture of the Romans forcibly illustrates how different was the part they filled in history from their æsthetic rivals, while their relative culture and amenity of manners is made apparent by the estimation which each race placed on art itself.

*Roman and Grecian taste.*

*Sensuousness and sensuality.*

*Salutary effects of religion in art.*

Phidias was the honored friend of Pericles. Public competitions in art were instituted at a very early period in Greece, and prizes solemnly bestowed by competent judges. The social position, incentives to ambition, and rewards given to Grecian artists were equal to those of their greatest men in other departments of genius. During the same period in Rome, say about 300 B. C., a noble citizen of the Fabian family, who had gained the surname of *Pictor* because of his skill in painting, was ridiculed and despised by his rude countrymen. In the lapse of centuries fashion converted contempt of art into a restless passion for its works. When Tiberius proposed to remove a statue of an athlete — mark how characteristic of the taste of the Romans was the profession — from the Baths of Agrippa to his own palace, he was obliged to desist, lest a dangerous riot should arise.

Roman love of art was like the passion of a man for his mistress. The more beautiful and costly, the more it stirred the envy of rivals, and bespoke his wealth and desires. The Greek, on the contrary, loved it for its own sake as the crowning joy of his life. One of the most ancient of his songs thus condenses his notions of the essentials of happiness: First, good health; second, BEAUTY; third, riches honestly acquired; fourth, social pleasure. Beauty, which meant art, is virtually at the head of the list, for health was indispensable to his æsthetic theory and practice. We may object to the sensuous nature of his felicity; but he gilded life with poetry, while the Roman defiled it by sensuality.

Carried to extremes, sensuousness is a more subtle and quite as sure a corrupter as sensuality, because it reduces life to sheer sensation, and incites to selfishness in its pursuit. The degree, not the quality, of the gratification, becomes the test of action. While Grecian art was influenced by religion, its aim was more to the majestic and sublime than to the sensuous-beautiful. Phidias and his great pupils illustrate the pure period, which lasted only from 450 to 400 years, B. C.; long enough to give rise to the noblest sculpture the world has seen, whenever they were free to execute according to their own judgments, as is evinced by what remains of the marbles of the Parthenon.

Although every religion in the form of a creed restricts and narrows art, yet it invariably exercises over it a salutary moral control, outside of the tendency to make it subservient to superstition. Sometimes it even puts a restraint on it in this respect. Numa prohibited effigies of the Divinity in human form. The Persians also considered it indecent to represent the gods in this way. What Moses and Mohammed enjoined everybody knows. But we do not give sufficient credit to the pagan clergy for their endeavors to keep art decent. Egyptian art was singularly decorous and chaste. Just as art was freed from priestly surveillance it tended toward sensuality. Bigotry imprisoned its spirit, but kept it clean. This we see in the case of Savonarola and all reformers, while unbelieving rulers, and popes of the Borgian and Medicean stamp, encouraged in it a license utterly opposed to religion pure and undefiled.

*Female nude. First naked Venus.*

It was not until the time of Praxiteles, when philosophical skepticism had greatly undermined the pagan faith, and art was wholly free, that the naked female figure was attempted. Even then art had its own canons of modesty, which ennobled the nude, and long preserved it from licentiousness. Venus and Love, being considered as the heaven-born companions of the severe-minded Minerva, were made as attractive as possible, but with features untainted by libidinous desire. It was left to the debauched Romans and unbelieving moderns to show them shameless and mercenary. In the degree that Grecian civilization was overborne by the Roman, its art fell from the service of gods and heroes to pandering to the lusts of men. Praxiteles and his followers, substituting the sensuous-pretty and the graceful-beautiful for the sublime, although doing perfect work of its kind, lowered the moral standard of sculpture, and prepared the way for its subsequent deg-

radation. For a brief period Lysippus upheld its dignity, but could not lead it back to its noblest estate. The first naked Venus was made by Praxiteles in connection with one draped in the usual style. But so fixed was public opinion then in favor of the chaster treatment that the citizens of Athens decided to take the clothed goddess in preference to the nude. It was not long, however, before the Cnedians, to whose lot the other fell, became so fond of their statue that they refused to part with it to the king of Bythinia in release of a heavy debt.

The physical training of the Greeks favored their art by providing it with models of strength and beauty of both sexes; but it had its questionable side. Spartan girls exercised naked in games intended to make them hardy and handsome. This and similar practices might be justified in their aim in a primitive age, if the eyes of men were proof against sensual allurements. In Greece, the resistance on sanitary and religious grounds to sensuality while in sight of temptation, was cogent for a time; but in the end, the licentiousness which had found its way into their art crept also into their manners, and all the more insidiously because of its being in its beginnings justified on reasons of faith and state. Still the intellectual refinement of the people, joined to their delight in the beautiful, retarded somewhat their descent into sensualism, besides making this condition less complete and base than with the uncultivated nations. But to this end it was sure to come with those who dedicated maidens to the service of Venus, and made prostitution legal and respectable. Pindar begins an ode to these corrupting neophytes thus: "Young girls, dispensers of pleasure, priestesses of Persuasion." At the fête of Apollo of Philèsie, prizes were given to those who could bestow the sweetest kiss. Competitions like this could not have been edifying to either actor or spectator. No wonder, then, that the artists, carried away by the popular current, finally, as Winkelman observes, worked less to satisfy the soul than the senses; adhering, however, to the national predilection for the human figure, and rejecting as low innovations those landscape and grotesque motives, which at a later period were in vogue with the Romans, to the detriment of the nobler styles of decoration, based on mythology and history. Lucian gives vent to his dislike of the new fashion, by saying, "I do not look in pictures for towns and mountains. I wish to see men, and to know by their attitudes and actions what they do and say." And this prejudice against, or want of enjoyment in

the landscape, as the northern races regard it, seems to adhere to all classical art, and to have been transmitted to the Latin races of our time. That objected to by Lucian was only a crude sort of wall-decoration, executed with but slight regard to truth of perspective design or local color. The basis of the Grecian taste was its passion and knowledge of human beauty in its sensuous-intellectual aspect. We will now inquire into that of their neighbors, the Etruscans.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ART AND RELIGION OF ETRURIA.

AMERICAN civilization leaves in the mind a sensation of rawness and restlessness. The imagination turns for relief to that future which looms up so impressively out of the present. There is no escaping the conviction, that there awaits America a material and moral destiny, unparalleled in history, despite the æsthetic barrenness of to-day. But for present enjoyment of this nature we must turn to countries whose poetry and art are mature, or so interblended with the past, that like the setting sun, they paint the distant horizon in impassioned purple and gold, dissolving it into shapes that speak of transcendent things. America is the land of promise, as Europe is of realization in art. The mystery lies in a primeval nature which unlocks its wealth to every toiler. There is wanted that profounder mystery which enshrouds a spent civilization, whose arts still survive to announce its former greatness.

Of all the old peoples of Italy that have made an impression on modern life, none interest more than the Etruscans. They have left a written language which no one can interpret; stupendous works, which time fails to destroy; and a rich and suggestive art, whose preservation is due to the silence of the grave, during nearly thirty centuries of undisturbed slumber. Everywhere their cities crowned picturesque, impregnable heights, rejoicing in varied views, pure air, and excessive climbing as greatly as modern towns delight in the easy access, heavy atmosphere, and confined scenery of the lowlands. Their inhabitants were a strong-limbed, broad-headed, industrious race, given to road and sewer making, canal-digging, and taming Nature generally. They were religious too, commercial, manufacturing; keen in business, luxurious, not unmindful of beauty, but preferring the strength and comfort that comes of a more practical view of things: a people, in the end, whose hard-earned

riches and mechanical science failed to save their state from an ambitious, warlike neighbor. Though subdued by arms, their arts and polity overcame the conqueror. For centuries they ruled the seas, and were the great wave-lords of antiquity. English in their maritime power, they had a similar liking for horse-racing and pugilism. Their origin is lost in the remotest history of the East. Nevertheless, their earliest civilization was indubitably filtered through Egyptian and Assyrian sources. Some of their primitive work has a decided look of the Nile, while there exist paintings and sculptures which bear a likeness to those of Nineveh.

*Sepulchres. Cities.*

Leaving the first Etruscans undisturbed in their historic shrouds, we will pry into their Italian annals, as their art may be called, because of the want of a key to the numerous inscriptions that still survive in their tongue. Most of these, being monumental, are an unflattering commentary on the egotistical practice of laudatory epitaphs in general. The Etruscan Smith is no whit the more famous for them than will be any of their modern imitators in the eloquence of a graveyard literature, after the final settlement of their estates has dropped their names, riches, and honors into oblivion. But while our successors ages hence will have nothing to thank Smith of to-day for in putting himself decorously into the family vault, we owe much to the ancient Smith for adding to his corpse the coveted objects of his life, and by painting and carving, showing us how he passed his time, what he thought of the present and future state, his favorite tastes and occupations, all of which posthumous gossip fellow-sympathy makes mortals anxious to know of each other, particularly when separated by great blanks in history. For a nation that did so much for civilization, whose gifts to it are in use now, the Etruscans are unfortunate in fame. The greedy Romans owed to them almost everything that made themselves respectable, but were careful that posterity should not know their full obligation. Indeed, the civilization of Etruria was so completely engulfed in Roman domination, that only antiquarians give a thought to their separate political existence. Their civil and domestic life is interesting, on account of its beaver-like common sense and Anglo-Saxon features in some particulars. The Yankee might call the old Etruscans his cousins, on many considerations. I should bewail their loss, if I thought Time was ever unjust in its revenges. Could we see the whole truth, their fate would, without doubt, appear to be

clearly the blasted fruit of their own rearing. Curiosity is legitimate when sympathy would be superfluous.

Greece and Judæa are as much vital forces to-day in civilization as when Socrates questioned and Isaiah prophesied, because their literature makes their immortal thoughts as familiar to every generation of men as those of its own intellectual kings. But that of Etruria is literally a voice of the dead, being the signs of things rather to be guessed than positively known. The names of its artists, rulers, and teachers, if found at all, are mere blanks, or so interwoven with fable as to have no weight in history. We gather from them that however distinguished a nation may become in trade and the common arts, unless it possesses a literature inspired by genius, it drops as easily and as little regretted out of the memory of mankind as any individual cotton-lord of Lowell or Birmingham at his decease. That which can be immediately replaced has no permanent, universal value.

If America, during her opportunity of material prosperity, does not secure a high position in art and literature, in her decadence she too will disappear out of history as has Etruria, leaving only a great shadow on the dial-plate of time, on which antiquaries only can trace a few scattered lights. No American who inquires into the moral science of history can escape this humiliating conviction; for he will perceive that nowhere has there existed a noble art and literature without corresponding elevation of thought and feeling, while the fame of Carthage, Tyre, and the nations of antiquity renowned only for wealth and luxury is as dust in the balance compared with the esteem in which every petty town is held which was the birthplace of the genius that marks a mental epoch.

Independent of other inducement, it is interesting to make the tour of ancient Etruria to examine the sites of her chief marts of commerce, and to enjoy the loveliness of the landscapes about them. Let us begin with Volterra, overlooking the Mediterranean, the Pisan territory, and a Plutonic stretch of country at its feet, split and warped by concealed fires into yawning fury of chasm and savage sterility of soil. Its position marks it for a doom as tragic as that of the cities of the plain of Sodom, for it seems destined to be engulfed in a vast quicksand, which slowly swallows by immense mouthfuls the mountain on which it stands. Already the Church of St. Guisti and whatever was in the vicinity has disappeared, while in the north it

now touches the Badia, from which the monks have fled in dismay, leaving their venerable cloisters quaking on the brink of a sliding precipice of sand several hundred feet in height, which leans towards the abyss of hidden waters that are sapping the soil above them with steady progress. Each year the distance lessens between it and the city, fascinated by the peril. Massive walls of three thousand years' standing may induce a feeling of security; but after following their long circuit in wonder at the solidity and vastness of the construction, it is startling to come suddenly upon a vaster work of Nature which menaces at any moment to destroy them utterly, and bury the people alive that trusted in their strength. The idea of a city being sucked into the bowels of the earth, interred as it were at one stroke, is awful. Yet with a stupidity that seems past belief, great as is man's capacity this way, the Volterrians refused to permit a citizen of Leghorn to drain the quicksand while it was possible, on condition of having the land for himself that he reclaimed from devastation. Possibly they feared the loss of one of their "sights," which are food and raiment to the impoverished cities of Italy.

Orvieto is as firmly as Volterra is uneasily placed on a rock, its walls in part rising directly from the perpendicular precipice and seemingly several hundred feet high. Perugia vagabondizes along the crests of a group of hills or terraces, evincing a disposition to reach the rich valleys below. Chiusi, with a glorious lookout over two lakes, girt with a green swell of mountains whose olive gardens and vineyards rise and sink until they dash their fragrance against its ugly walls, shows a dark spot in a lovely background. The kingly virtues of Porsenna are as much forgotten in his now beggarly capital as is his tomb, once a wonder of the world. But what else could happen in a nest of excavators whose most productive industry is rifling graves, fleecing the visitor, and getting up antiquities for the market. My landlord could give me nothing to eat tenderer than the integuments, — it might have been of an ancestral mummy, so tough and skinny was the substance, and so in sympathy with his own nature, — but he had to offer *his* Etruscan museum for fifty thousand francs.

The ascent to the bedrooms was guarded by a long file of lugubrious cinerary urns of archaic rudeness. In fact, Chiusi is neither cheerful nor tidy, but still has some genuine art and objects of archeological interest, although its best collec-

tion, the Casucinni, has recently been sold to the city of Palermo.

The Maremma is a vast cemetery of Etruscan cities whose once vigorous life is replaced by pestilence and desolation. Scarcely a spadeful of earth can be turned up without disturbing the dust of their inhabitants. An equally picturesque selection of sites obtains here as elsewhere. Cortona is the queen in this respect, though Citta della Piéve, garlanded by oak and chestnut forests, looks on a landscape not so diversified, but in some details more charming.

I opine their founders had no greater liking for the landscape, than modern Italians. Sanitary and political considerations led them to choose the hills. Before the plains were drained and planted, they were unwholesome. Yet in locating their towns, and disposing their huge walls and gateways, they must have been guided by some latent instinct of the beautiful, even in a land where Nature is so prodigal of it that it is difficult not to secure a share of her charms in building either villa or city. Their effects of landscape could scarcely have been made more delightful had their situations been expressly chosen with this end in view.

It is unnecessary to specify the antiquarian distinctions of Etruscan art. The better way to get at its general characteristics is to study the contents of the tombs. These were excavated or built much like the dwellings of the living in ground-plan, except when they took the form of mausoleums, which were constructed on an immense scale with a labyrinthine interior. Their ruins are more like the works of Nature than man. The walls and ceilings of tombs were lavishly sculptured and painted, and when first opened, these decorations are quite perfect. After an experience of the ghastly relics of our sepulchres, it is with pleased astonishment one enters an Etruscan house of the dead. If it be one hitherto undisturbed, the visitor may find himself as it were in the presence of the original proprietors. Apartments opening one into another have a look of domestic life, while the ornamentation is not confined to mythological or symbolical motives, but is interspersed with scenes of festivity, games, races, threatrical exhibitions, and whatever the occupants once enjoyed in the flesh ; indicating that they fancied they were entering on a new life resembling in many particulars their old. It shows in another form the Indian notion of new and better hunting-grounds in the lands of the Great Spirit. Still good and evil had much to do with the reception that awaited

them. Guardian genii, effigies of the avengers of wrong, protectors of the virtuous, symbols of immortality, occult doctrines put into pictorial form, gazed at them from carved and frescoed roofs and walls, which were protected from wanton hands by figures of monstrous serpents, demons, or the snake-entwined visage of the terrible Medusa. There were too many valuable objects deposited in the tombs for them to be safe from the cupidity of the living, unless they were made awful as well as sacred to the common imagination. Indeed, there is reason for believing that deposits of jewels were sometimes covertly withdrawn by the family after publicly complying with the established customs, or perhaps were stolen by conscience-seared workmen, who knew how to effect an entrance into sepulchres of their own making. Enough valuable objects have, however, been left to stock the museums of Europe; the fruit of a notion that their owners, needing them in the life to which they were going, kept them ever within reach.

On entering a tomb at Volterra I was surprised to see wine and food placed on one of the urns. A flickering torch cast a mysterious light on the pale figures that looked at me with great, staring eyes, holding out their libation-cups as if to be filled. I asked my peasant-guide if his ancestors still hankered for the wine of their old farms." O, no," was the reply; "we put it here to cool for ourselves." It seems one must come to Italy to learn best how to utilize the grave-chill in a more practical sense than that of a moral refrigerator or ethical bugbear.

If the tomb be anterior to the Roman custom of burning corpses, we may find the noble proprietors, male and female, laid out in state on bronze biers or couches, looking life-like, with their jewelry and armor on, as prompt in all appearance for love's or war's conquests as ever. Their favorite furniture, vases, bronzes, articles of toilet, toys of children, and engraved primers are in their places about them, ready to be used. A few minutes' action of the fresh atmosphere reduces the bodies to dust, but the articles remain as perfect as when put there. The family scene of some sepulchres is made more real by rows of portrait statues in various attitudes on urns and sarcophagi arranged after the manner of a fashionable reception. In those days the guests mostly reclined at banquets. We find the figures often in that position. If husband and wife, they are decorously embracing, or the arm of the man is caressingly put on the shoulder of his partner. Each is draped as in life with their usual orna-

The Cleveland School of Art.

ments and insignia of rank. The base which contains the bodies or ashes is elaborately sculptured, and sometimes gilded and painted; the scenes being taken from the lives of the deceased or the current mythology.

Such tombs constitute the libraries and museums of Etruscan history. Without them we should have known next to nothing of it, and modern art would have lost its most graceful and precious models of jewelry, bronzes, and vases. How abundant such objects were we may gather from the fact that Flavius Flaccus stole from one small town, the ancient Volsumium, two thousand bronze statues, as one part of his plunder. Some believe that the Etruscans anticipated and were superior to the Greeks in the working of bronze and making fictile vases. Each people possessed a distinctive art, the origin of which was equally rude and archaic, but both were perfected in Italy, the Greek by means of colonies in Southern Italy, and the Etruscan in the north, until their styles so commingled, or were so interchanged by commerce that they seem to the inexperienced eye to be the product of one people.

Etruscan art, notwithstanding, has its root as firmly in national ideas and habits as the Greek. Instead of a keen sense of ideal beauty, it manifests a love of fact. Essentially realistic in spirit, it prefers vigor and strength, and tells its story frankly and forcibly rather than gracefully or elegantly. Before it profited by Greek examples, it was heavy and exaggerated in design with an unwitting leaning to the grotesque, often coarse, but expressive and sincere. Ignoring the principles of Greek selection and idealism, it looked more to common nature for inspiration, striving to make it look exactly as it was, and not as it should be according to the laws of æsthetics. Nevertheless it possessed a lofty creative faculty, which at times raised its feeling to the sublime. This supernal, mystical element came to it from the Oriental blood of the race. Homer inspires alike Grecian and Etruscan art, but radical differences in treatment and execution of the same motive are often evinced.

*Ideas of death and future life. Domestic life. Volumni sculptures.*

I find also an essential distinction in their ideas of death and future life as seen in their sepulchral art. Apparently the Greek was so absorbed in sensuous enjoyment, or his religious faith was so shaken by his teachers of philosophy, that he formed no very precise notion of his condition in the next world. Vague and shadowy it appears, though often beautifully poetical according to the in-

terior sense of some myths, but lacking the exhortative and punitive character of the more stable and sterner Egyptian and Etruscan dogmas. Respect for the gods, love of beauty, heroism, present enjoyment, viewing the future speculatively or leaving it to expound itself, — such was his theology. But the Etruscan was more positive and practical in spite of its element of Oriental mysticism. Indeed this positiveness may be traced to the strong faith of his Asiatic ancestry, whose imaginations were extremely susceptible to spiritual influences from unseen powers and whose minds were trained to reject the pantheistic notions of the more versatile Greeks. None were more so than the Jews and Persians. Coming down from them, this habit of unquestioning reliance on a revealed hereafter rooted itself in the creeds of Christendom, and most positively in the tenets of Protestantism. Whenever revelation as defined by a church has come into collision with science, religion has tried to drive the other out of the field of inquiry, by branding it as heresy or apostasy. It is interesting to note how far the Etruscan idea of a future existence coincides with the so-called Christian.

That joyous reliance on his fancy which contented his neighbor, evidently did not satisfy the conscience of the Etruscan. Like the northerns whose harshest doctrines find shape in the diabolism of Calvinistic theology, he too, must have a material hell, with suitable demons, but with this noteworthy difference: his final doom was adjudged, not according to his faith, but his works. He was sentenced by infallible judges according to his good and evil deeds, which were weighed in infallible scales. Etruscan tomb-sculpture is much taken up by these solemn scenes. An expectant fiend sits outside the door leading to torment. Directly opposite is the entrance to the regions of happiness, guarded by a good angel. The soul on trial is attended by the two good and bad genii, one of which was supposed to have been its protector, and the other its tempter, while living. As either is able to turn the scales of justice, so is the eternal condition of their charge decided.

The demonism of Etruria is sterner and less mystical than the Egyptian, and not so frightful as that of Christendom. Images of terror, however, are common, and made as ugly and repulsive as those of the opposite character are made handsome and attractive. Typhon, one of the angels of death, is a beauty, compared with his modern namesake, while big-eared, heavy-limbed Charon, with his fatal hammer, is mild and pleasing be-

side Spinello's mediæval Beëlzebub. Their most successful essays at ferocious ugliness give a grotesque exaggeration of the negro physiognomy and human form. Serpents figure largely, both in a good and bad sense, as a symbol of eternity. The important truth recognized in the sepulchral art is an *immediate* judgment passed on each soul at its exit from earth, and the substantiality of the rewards or punishments that await it.

The Etruscans were eminently a domestic people of warm social affections. Woman seems to have held a position equal to man's. She is constantly represented as sharing his cares and joys. The wife was highly honored, not subordinated, as in Greece, to an accomplished class of courtesans; nor was the relation stained by such laxity as at a subsequent period defiled Roman households. Indeed, Etruscan art is singularly pure and serious, except as it borrowed from foreign sources its dissolute Bacchic rites. But these were never very popular. Their artists prefer exhibiting the natural emotions with touching directness and simplicity. One favorite subject was the death-parting of families. The husband, wife, child, lover, or friend, as the case may be, embraces or tenderly shakes the hand of the dying, whose features express entire resignation, while the group about are moved with grief, but all seem animated by a conviction of reunion in a future state. Children are held to the pale lips to take their last kiss, and the pet dog watches in silent sympathy the hired mourners perform their functions. The dignity and courtesy manifested by the principals in these farewells show that no doctrinal despair poisoned their latest hours. They seem rather to look upon the separation as one does a call to a long journey. A spirit-horse for the man, and a chariot for a woman, are always depicted quietly waiting outside with their winged attendants, until they are needed to carry the departed to their new land. If death has already occurred, their torches are reversed.

The Greeks loved to look on death in a sensuously beautiful shape, like Endymion sleeping, or Hylas, borne away by lovely water-nymphs. They wished to disguise its dismal features. It was best regarded as a sweet slumber or a delightsome ravishment. An Etruscan shielded his senses by no such poetical expedients. He felt it to be a real journey to a new country, and so represented it for good or bad on the evidence of character. His artistic creations to people the unseen world were not simply deified, supersensuous human beings, but a distinct supernal

race, with attributes corresponding to their spiritual functions. We have seen what his devils were. His genii, furies, and other celestials were grand in idea, often sublime; and as beautiful as he could make them. They were more elevated in conception and functions than those of the Grecian mythology; fit precursors of Giotto's, Orgagna's, and Luca Signorelli's angels and archangels. In truth, mediæval art had not much to change in adjusting this phase of the antique to its own purposes. The infant Jupiter in the arms of his nurse, of the Campagna basreliefs, is the legitimate model of subsequent Madonnas. But the most striking of their supernal effigies are the two Furies which guard the portals of the chief sarcophagus in the Volunni tomb at Perugia.

The contents of this family vault merit the more attention because of their pure Etruscan character in the best time of art, when its native strength was tempered by Grecian feeling. Several generations are here deposited in elegant urns, all admirable, especially two that face the entrance to the principal chamber. One holds the ashes of the head of the house; the other, the remains of a lady of the same name. Both monuments are remarkable for extreme simplicity, pure style, breadth of design, and refined adaptation to their honored purpose. The man lies in a half upright posture on a richly draped couch, with his head upraised. He is not *dead*, as we moderns persist in representing our departed, as if disbelieving in the immortality of the soul, and believing firmly in impressing on the mind disagreeable images of material dissolution; nor does he placidly *sleep*, as the mediævalists, with better taste and feeling, represent their dead, while awaiting the universal resurrection; but with more truth than either, he LIVES.

This vital characteristic displays the skill of the artist in preserving the likeness without any loss of solemnity of motive. The figures in question appear to be the veritable individuals they represent; receiving us with the same dignity they would have shown, had our call been two thousand years earlier, before they had entered into their marble-silence. We learn from from them that their relations believed they entered at once into a new existence without an intermediate sleep, of uncertain duration or purgatorial probation; ideas common to the Protestants and Catholics. I understand the Etruscan on his coffin to say, "I am still my identical self, called to a new part in life, but retaining every experience which made me what I was; any

change depends on processes of growth and development analogous to those which constituted my personality on earth. Meantime I am an Etruscan gentleman, quite at your service." These old pagans took a more common-sensed view of the doctrine of immortality than moderns do. They may have overmuch sensualized their notion, by too palpably connecting it with an exhibition of the pleasures of this life; but as they made the degree of enjoyment hereafter to depend on the right use of present gifts, their test of worthiness was both salutary and hopeful, as the moral world was then constituted.

The base of the chief of the Volunni monuments combines simplicity of treatment with a sublime motive, the profound spirituality of which is excelled only by Blake's design of "Death's Door;" a similar suggestion, which to my mind is the most eloquent composition as yet conceived by Christian art to foreshadow the entrance of a human being into eternal life. The Etruscan effigies do not so much express the fact as the mysteries that attend it. On each side of the door representing the passage from the tomb to the new existence, sits a colossal, winged female, in whom the highest intellectual attributes of both sexes are united, devoid of any sexual feeling. They are chastely draped, and wear sandals. One hand holds a burning torch, and the other is slightly turned towards the door, with an expression on their features as if they were about to reveal the great secret of what comes after death. In reality these figures are not three feet high, but so grandly treated and conceived as to impress the spectator's mind at the first glance with an idea of supernal force and functions. Although sitting with their feet drawn upwards and crossed, the sculptor has given them a self-supporting look, as if they needed no material aid in any position; organic will alone sufficing to put them in repose or motion. In this subtle suggestion of the triumph of spirit over matter, they surpass Michael Angelo, who never wholly divests his sibyls, prophets, or allegorical figures of their grosser material effects as to size, solidity, and weight by thoroughly subordinating them to the purely spiritual elements of their characters. But his work in general shows so much kinship, especially in force and depth of meaning and execution, to the art now under examination, as to mark him as a genuine descendant of an Etruscan ancestry of old masters whose names are now unknown. Their spirit, like their blood, lives again in him in its consummate power. Yet it is not until the full intent and feel-

ing of his finest symbolical statues, as, for example, the "Night and Day" of the Medici Chapel, flow into the mind, that an unwelcome sense of their physical exaggeration entirely disappears. The spiritual superiority of the Etruscan supernal figures is manifested by their suggesting nothing below the standard of a lofty conception, which bursts on the senses like a prophetic revelation. We share the trembling awe of the four human shadows, in faded fresco, dimly seen issuing from the sepulchre, looking anxiously and inquiringly at the mystical guardians who await them at the portals of Eternity. Modern learning calls them furies. Nevertheless, their countenances are benevolent and welcoming. May we all meet no more unkindly faces than theirs on being ushered into our final homes.

The less elaborate monument of the lady is as well treated in another way. A fine head of Medusa is the only ornament on the base. Like the rest, the cornice contains an obituary inscription. A handsome matron in her prime, profusely and elegantly draped, is seated in a curule chair on its top. Her right arm is bare and upraised; and the hand with unconscious action plays with her shoulder, as she earnestly listens, bending a little forward and looking downward. One fancies her to be a judge, accustomed to be revered and obeyed; a just and gracious lady.

Etruscan women were trusted housekeepers. They sat at the head of the table, and kept the keys, except those of the wine-cellars; a precaution which, with as much probability, tells against their husbands as them. They seem to have had greater social freedom, and were eligible to more offices, than is the modern woman. One of the female ancestors of Mæcenas was a military commander. There is reason to suppose that our lady of the Volunni once held a high office; a supposition all the more plausible from the authoritative, masculine pose of the right hand on the knee. Without detracting from the grace and beauty of the image, it adds decision and firmness to its character. The motive and treatment of this little monument, as a whole, is as effectively suggestive as Buonarotti's "Duke Giuliano," miscalled in guidebooks "Lorenzo;" but the plates of it and the others published by Count Connestabile fail to do them justice.

Miniature genii in terra-cotta, attached to the lamps, hang from the roof of the tomb. They are graceful and appropriate conceptions, on a par in sentiment with Fra Angelico's guiding angels in his "Last Judgment." An ecstatic character akin to his is sometimes seen in the old Etruscan art. It cannot be con-

founded with the Grecian beautiful, for it is the result of a higher insight into our spiritual being. At first thought, it appears strange that so fine a mystic element should be found in the art of a people the chief attributes of whose supreme good or God were Strength, Riches, and Wisdom, not Love, not even admitting into their list of Divine credentials the much-worshipped Beauty of their relations and neighbors, but holding to the same material and practical view of life that the English race now do under the specious term "common-sense." Yet through this grosser apprehension of things there is ever to be detected a spiritual clairvoyance which lingers in their blood, as originally derived from Oriental sources. Purged of the worst traits of Asiatic superstition and mysticism, it still speaks intelligibly to us after its long sleep.

The greatest puzzle of Etruscan art is that extraordinary bronze found at Arezzo, now in the Uffizi gallery, called, in antiquarian despair, the "Chimera." It has the body of a lion, out of the back of which grows the head of a goat poisoned by the bite of a serpent, which forms the tail of this composite beast, whose entire body is beginning to show the effects of the venom of its own extremity. If it admit of interpretation, I should say that the lion represented the strength and riches of Etrurian civilization, the goat its corrupting luxury, and the reptile the fatal sting of sin that finally cast it down into the mire, never to rise again among the nations.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### CLASSICAL AND CHRISTIAN ART COMPARED.

ANTIQUITY has not much to offer of æsthetic value outside of Grecian and Etruscan art. As we have seen, Asiatic and Egyptian art were too intimately blended with their originating faiths to possess an interest apart, or to influence modern life in any appreciable degree. We now come to those schools, based on the Christian faith, which have supplanted all others as a living, positive agency in civilization.

*The art of Rome.*

Should any one ask What of Roman art? I reply, Nothing. Understanding Grecian and Etruscan, he knows this also. An indigenous art never grew up in Rome, nor was any school of her own organic initiation ever established there. Rome conquered art as she did nations, and transplanted it matured into her own ground, subjecting it to the slavery of her own desires, as she likewise bought and sold free-born artists as common slaves. Art became abundant within her walls, but this was due either to the ostentation of the rich or it was stolen from weaker peoples. As regards my purpose, it is only necessary to remember that the art of ancient Rome came either from Greece or Etruria, or was the interblended product of their transplanted schools, presenting no national characteristics. Cicero ordered statues from Athens for his villas because they could be had there cheaper and better than at home. Fine Greek art came into vogue in Rome because it had none of its own. In view of the patronage bestowed on artists from the first Cæsar to the latest Pope, its collections and museums, its atmosphere of learning and amateurship, and the stimulus given by church, state, and individuals to every form of art, it appears strange that no distinctive school has ever come of it all. Every other Italian city, one can almost say village, has had its local, characteristic, permanent style of art. I except, of course, the magnificent architecture which was formed by and for the impe-

rial institutions after the more simple and sterner Etruscan forms had gone into disuse with their contemporary republican ideas. But my remark is strikingly true of painting and sculpture. Whenever an emperor or pope had need of art, he lured the artist from more favored sites. Either the native mind is incapable of anything original in this direction or else the political and religious institutions have ever been unfavorable to its development other than in a secondary and academical form. Intellectual and political freedom are requisite for noble art to root itself firmly in any soil. These Rome has never had since she knew the meaning of the word. If we look far back, we find that the works and artists that have given celebrity to Rome are of foreign origin. So, too, in mediæval, renaissant, and recent times. Giotto, Fra Angelico, Luca Signorelli, Perugino, D. Ghirlandajo, Michael Angelo, Cellini, are examples familiar to all readers, not to mention a long list of sculptors. Usually Raphael is said to have founded the Roman school of painting. But he no more founded one here than in Perugia or Florence, in each of which he left paintings that influenced the styles of his contemporaries. When he came to Rome, his own was matured, though subsequently modified by the study of classical art and the fashionable infidelity in regard to all religion. Dying prematurely, he left less traces of himself, so far as concerns pupils competent to further develop his manner, in Rome than even elsewhere. Its siege and sack by the Constable Bourbon shortly after drove away the few incompetent scholars that had remained.

Rome is a cosmopolitan capital, whither come to reside, as in a great inn, artists of all the modern schools, with some special purpose in view, never amalgamating with the resident population or inspiring it with rivalry, still less arousing any native genius, but simply making an æsthetic convenience or eligible bazaar of the place. As it is, Rome has no more claim to any original creative influence on Christian than it had on pagan painting and sculpture. In summing up the latter phase, I am of necessity limited to the forms they assumed inspired by the sensuous idealism of Greece, or the vigorous realism of Etruria. –

Art concerns history chiefly on the side of its morality. Its immediate office as regards the individual is to confer enjoyment. But the great problem to be solved, in both its particular and general aspects, is the amount of good or evil it holds, as might be said, in solution. Questions like these are pertinent. Where did paganism leave art? How did Christianity take it up?

What was its effect on it? Which form is the most successful one viewed æsthetically, and which the more cogent in a moral or spiritual sense.

Some might object that it is less important to know how others lived than to know how to live ourselves. But if the experience of those who have passed on to their final judgment can profit the living, by all means let us utilize it. I repeat that the art of a nation is as correct a chart of its virtue and vice as the taste of an individual is a veritable disclosure of his mental constitution. He who maintains that speech and art were given to conceal the real thought, only the more effectually discloses himself. At all events, the causes of the rise and fall of peoples are clearly set forth in their art. Christianity did not of itself kill the antique pagan styles, but it interred them. They were virtually dead and gone to corruption before the new religion was established. The causes of this dissolution are found in their constitutions. When it is asserted that the distinctive success of Greek art was owing to the worship of beauty, it must also be stated that the common mind, naturally viewing it more in its material than ideal aspect, finally perverted its pure into sensual shapes. Etruscan art, following the Roman bent, became even baser in forms and grosser in thoughts. As both degenerated in intellectual standard, an even more marked decline took place in their execution, so that at last each appeared as rude as when its archaic efforts first began, without their redeeming simplicity and sincerity. Decaying art steps from one low platform to a lower in quick succession. We should be thankful that the false and base in large measure perish with the immediate evil they occasion. Sin by nature is transitory and suicidal, but every noble act and idea is immortal by virtue of birthright. We owe to the Greeks, for the examples they have given of noble life born of their art, literature, and philosophy, an incalculable debt, which can be appreciated only as we raise ourselves to the same intellectual height. It is not necessary or possible to recreate their life, but whatever there was in it true and lovely in principle, we may search out and apply to ourselves. The crowning virtue of their art came less of the popular taste for Beauty than the aspirations of the men of letters for Wisdom. Athéne was more cherished by them than Venus. From the outset of their national existence she was their protective goddess, associated in their minds with ideas of strength, learning, and

*Crowning virtue of Grecian art.*

*Pleasure and pain as motives.*

*The Christian hope and fear*

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prudence that belong only to omniscient knowledge and power, typified in Jupiter, her father. The chief desire of a cultivated Athenian was to make every feature of life complete and beautiful. Hence the splendid practical heroisms of early Grecian history; joyfully obeying to the death the needs of the state, as did Leonidas and his companions; fighting monsters and rescuing innocence, as did Theseus; or Socrates preferring truth with poison to life denying it. This manly, large-sided, far-seeing courage and faith, joined to a keen pursuit of wisdom, exalted Grecian art, and even sustained its external beauty for a time after the purer inspiration failed within. A Greek of the right stamp was not satisfied with simply doing the right thing; he must enjoy doing it; and to be certain of this, he had to keep his vital organs in that healthful condition which best fitted him to receive pleasure in their exercise, according to his understanding of human duty. His artistic training was a help to him.

Virtually pleasure or pain in right-doing is the dividing line between the Greek and Byzantine religious art-motives. This radical antagonism of principle offers a clue to follow out the comparison which they challenge. With both, art and ethics are as inseparable as substance and shadow. If the ideal of the Grecian motive was Wisdom, that of the Christian was no less Virtue. The pagan trained himself to know; the Christian, to believe. Consequently the mental foundation of the one rested on Instruction, of the other on Revelation, and their correlate vices become sophistry and superstition. But the spiritual standard of Christian art is based on the celestial chorus which proclaimed "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men." By these words we test its quality. Its office is to promote faith in God, and harmony between Him and man. The best pagans saw God under the aspects of supreme wisdom and power, but the disciples of the Nazarene were taught to behold Him rather as supreme Love or Sacrifice. Both believed that the ultimate object of being was Happiness, but with a vital distinction. The Greek held that his joy was best won in this life, and the Christian in the next. Each vigorously pursued the pleasurable or painful means dictated by their faith to attain their respective aims.

Every human being requires for spiritual sustenance the hope of immediate or prospective compensation or reward. Humanity errs, however, in always fixing on a future period for its realization of its ideal heaven; not seeing that its coveted happiness

depends rather on present conditions of mind, and in the main is independent of time and most material things, when those conditions are in harmony with spiritual laws. Material objects then become gracious accessories, instead of being the imperious principals of life. The heaven man most needs is a capacity of spontaneously enjoying the gifts of Providence, based on a self-earned well-being and mental discipline, with a childlike gratitude of reception and purity of use. This is a felicity within the reach of all who heartily accept the manifest system of divine ethics, irrespective of the abstruse subtleties of creeds. The heathen sage sought to secure supreme equanimity by triumphing over matter now, while the Christian neophyte, accepting life as a perpetual offence, trial, and grief, postponed the fruition of his hope until his spirit was released from the body.

It must be allowed that the hope of the Christian was more comprehensive, more sustaining, more self-denying, more humane, and more clairvoyant in its insight into the spiritual elements of human nature than the pagan. Demanding more of man, exacting loftier motives, it also conferred more transcendent happiness, as is apparent in comparing Jesus with Socrates, or the prophets and poets of Judæa with the oracles and men of speculative science of Greece.

We may now trace the course of Christian art in the pursuit of its more spiritual-minded standard, taking it up at that period when, seeing its predecessor only in its dissolute decadence, it began by viewing all past art with horror and distrust, but compelled by the necessities of proselytism to put it to use, denuded it of its old truth and beauty, and reduced it to a service opposed in itself to every principle of true art, namely, Asceticism. In another way this was quite as mischievous a falsehood as the heathen adoration of the beautiful after losing faith in its divine sense. The Christian error had its origin in the reaction of religious faith and consequent art-motives to the opposite mental extreme. Instead of vigorous heroic action as the object and guerdon of life, the new doctrines presented an ideal Rest or contemplative Idleness as the supreme reward kept in store for excessive self-sacrifice by a mystical godhead whose chiefest functions were vicarious salvation and retributive judgment. The spiritual consolations which the gospel of Jesus did really offer were largely obscured by a diabolical imagery and bodily penances invented by the new priesthood. They poisoned the religious mind with the notion that the Deity was better pleased

with human misery than its joy, and did not scruple even to imply that a portion of the satisfaction of those admitted to their heaven would be derived from witnessing the physical torture imposed on the excluded in the name of Him whose dying prayer for His enemies was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Only by abnegation of reason and justice could such doctrines be accepted. There was no substantial warrant for them in the language of the Founder of Christianity. By any people of liberal culture, like the old Greeks, they would have been rejected as degrading to their conception of the Creator, debasing to human character, and destructive of the idea of the parental relation by which Christ revealed God. But the world had again become either extremely rude and ignorant, or corrupt and sophisticated, so that the usurpers of power had peoples at their disposition easy to be imposed upon by imaginary terrors or overcome by brute force. The strength of the new dogma lay in its enforced horror of death, or rather its dreadful consequences. A Christian was taught to believe that no sacrifice of his natural desires was too great to make in order to avert the wrath in store for an unshriven soul. Nominally he could choose between heaven and hell; but the Church held the keys of both, opening the one or condemning to the other according as it was propitiated by implicit obedience and gifts. What wholesome art, science, or literature could flourish in an atmosphere of such intense bigotry and selfish interests! The worst paganism never gave birth to a more deleterious tenet than the unqualified doctrine of hell-fire, the outgrowth of brutalizing asceticism; demonstrating that "man is man's worst devil." To avoid damnation, men became fierce and sanguinary, tormenting their species as if they were themselves the very fiends they feared. In order to ensure mutual salvation, they broke every gospel obligation of love and charity. Finally, their minds were so obfuscated by senseless discussions on points of theology and moral practice that they voluntarily inflicted on themselves tortures and privations scarcely less painful than those in prospect after death. It really looks as if the frightful paradox had taken possession of the religious mind, that to become a Christian in sect, one must be as unchristian in act as it was possible to be. Incalculable misery to nations and individuals came of it. Intellectual pride had done much to shipwreck the national hope of Greece, but the cowardice, cruelty, and egoism which sprung from the monkish notions that man was born to live by fear, and

not by love, were most calamitous wherever they got the upper hand. Self-sacrifice was gloried in, not because it purified and exalted the soul, but as a passport to future reward. The surest test of a virtuous heart was thus perverted into a deadly snare.

If a speaking example be needed to disclose more potentially the effect of these ideas on human thought, place a distorted skeleton of a Byzantine crucifix, made more hideous by its enamelled trinketry of blue and gold, beside an antique Apollo, as a conception of a god; a filthy, limb-distorted St. Stylus on his column or a foolish hermit of the Thebaid in company with the handsome youths of Greece, fresh from Olympian games; then compute what darkness must have entered the heart to impel man to regard with devotional awe the false and ugly art and false and ugly lives that so lyingly boasted a Christian parentage.

Words are inadequate to depict the actual debasement of humanity effected by asceticism. To appreciate its depth, its practical operation must be seen. Look at only one of the black shadows it casts back from mediæval times. The Sanctuary of St. Francis is built high up a mountain ravine, a few miles from Assisi. A visit convinced me that it is quite a different thing to see a noted site of asceticism than to read a description of the movement in unimpassioned print. But it is the best way to get at the intensity of its influence in causing men to rely on physical misery and mental imbecility as the accepted tokens of divine favor.

St. Francis himself was not a vagabond hermit, whose sanctity consisted of dirt, emaciation, idleness, and senseless bewailing; but he was an efficient reformer, doing much good work in his day. Whether his institutions were the best means then possible of improving the lives of the people or not, it does not concern my topic to discuss. They flourished to a surprising extent, and even now, after many radical changes, are conspicuous, although deprived of their former rights. Our present view of him is not that of the sumptuous, magnificent saint, laid out in more than regal pomp among the hierarchs of the Church in the famous convent of his own founding, glorified by art as few men have ever been in virtue of sanctity, but of the man he thought himself to be; a mean, despicable being, begging forgiveness of God for every pleasing sensation, and even instinct of cleanliness; doing penance, as did St. Catherine, for combing his head; and in all ways striving to impress on his soul the conviction that his body was a dangerous and filthy-disposed thing.

The locality was fitly chosen to battle with flesh and Satan. Around and above, the mountain is too sterile to nourish any green herb; a stony desolation shutting in the sanctuary except in front, which opens on the upper valley of the Tiber until the view is cut off by the opposite Appenines. A grove of hardy trees has grown up at the back of the convent, following for a little distance the course of the precipitous ravine which serves as a water-course after severe rains. The edifice itself, built over the original cell of St. Francis, fits well the landscape. Judging by the diminutive size of the dormitories and indeed all the offices, elbow-room was a forbidden luxury. Some were mere caves cut out of the rock, into which no ray of sun could enter. Even at noon-day my guide took me by the arm to conduct me. The rough stone floors and walls were black with the foulness of many generations of unwashed friars; the rude furniture was equally grimy; heavy masses of soot encrusted the ceiling of the refectory-kitchen, the sole place where fire was ever allowed; while throughout the atmosphere was damp and unpleasant, worsened by the odors of foul clothing and fouler bodies.

Untidy poverty is never sweet, even in a rose-embowered cottage; a rebellious sewer is expected to breed righteous discontent in the least sensitive nose; rotten garbage rightly chastises with fever those who permit it; but no one is commanded to be enamoured of them as the essence of divine things. Saints and sinners may cordially unite to abate these nuisances. But the old asceticism, regarding filth and ignorance as capital virtues, came at last to robe godliness in them. I shivered with disgust at the touch of my pilot, for it seemed to betoken impending disease, which needs be exorcised at once by fresh air and water. For society each friar had a cat. One of the brethren told me he had been sent here seven years before, but felt it was no place for him, as the long, humid winters gave him the rheumatism. But "what would you have, sir?" he ejaculated with a sigh of resignation, as if there were no other possibility of dutiful life. But a fatter and more voluble brother with an ambiguous leer, such as a dissolute satyr might have put on when paganism was going to the dogs, did the chief honors.

He took me first to a miraculous well of never-failing water which flowed out of the rock at the intercession of St. Francis, and had such a capacity for healing all manner of diseases that in some years, until the wholesale vagabondizing was forbidden

by the government of Italy, fifteen thousand pilgrims visited it from Naples alone, with gifts to the convent. It was also a preventive against sickness, and altogether too sacred for the use of the friars, they being limited to a precarious supply from another source, which, however, was sufficient for their few wants of the article. Yet St. Francis, whatever might have been his bodily habit, had a profound poetical esteem for water. In his popular "Canticle of the Sun," composed for the use of the pilgrims, he chants its virtues as follows: "Praised be my Lord for our sister *water*, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble, and precious, and *clean*." No hydropathist could praise it in fewer and more beautiful words. Those who see religious institutions only in their decadence, miss much, both of the aroma of their pristine piety and the reasons for those severe rules which were the basis of their organic usefulness. With a spirit of inconsistency in relation to this element that seems a marvel in view of the above praise, the saint predicted great disasters in store for the Church of Rome whenever the usually dry water-course beneath the convent flowed abundantly. Pointing to a deep hole in the rock close by, covered by an iron shutter, the leering friar said that was made by the Devil, who plunged headlong down it at the command of the saint, on being foiled in tempting him with carnal persuasions, and he added, "The Devil has never since been back," which I doubted.

There was a mysterious twinkle in the eye of my ascetic friend, but I could not make out whether it was a sign of ecstatic faith or a feeler to probe my opinion of his stories. He exhibited a rude crucifix kept under glass with other relics in the oratory, which had been worn into polished shapelessness by devout kisses. A cardinal who had been cured by it of a dangerous complaint, insisted, so he said, on taking it to Rome, where he hung it up at his bedside. On awakening the next morning, it was missing, and at the same instant was seen back in its old post, — concluding the tale with "As you see," and several rapid winks. Another long-armed crucifix in the chapel had boxed the ears of a countess who was praying to it in an improper frame of mind; and to keep it company, there was a loquacious Madonna, extremely ugly and archaic.

I asked if women by chance ever got inside their fold. Such an event had occurred on one occasion, to their infinite horror, but the sex was not discovered until the supposed friar was dying. It was all owing to her intense desire to live in such

holy company. Women can visit the cell and chapel of St. Francis, but must not enter the convent itself. Both cell and chapel are mere dens in the rock, the former scarcely long enough for him to have lain down at full length on the bare stone floor which was his only bed, with a billet of wood for a pillow. This sybarite couch, on which he used to lie naked at all seasons, is needlessly protected from profane touch by an iron grating.

On such evidence, who can doubt the sincere austerity of the well-intentioned saint, or dispute the tendency of asceticism to degrade the minds and dishonor the bodies of its disciples? Bad as was the example of St. Francis, it supplanted a worse one, as I was shown, on being led to the lairs of the hermits who preceded him here. These were literally enlarged snake-holes in the rocks. Some were in positions inaccessible, except by those whose lives in the wilderness had developed in them some of the forces as well as habits of beasts. One consisted of a narrow inclined tunnel through which rain, wind, and snow had free passage. A portion of the side-soil had been worn smooth by the crouching body of the occupant, as it rested against it when the water was too deep for him to lie at full length on the floor. This covert was about ten feet long by two high and three broad, rough and sharp throughout, except in those parts made flat by running water or the calloused skin of the hermit. Lest anything be wanting to complete human wretchedness, solitude and silence, except of the stated prayers, was enjoined on this holy ground. And this kind of life was, and is now by many, believed to be the climax of Christian progress.

Need we wonder at the erotic or hellish visions of St. Anthony, the nude flagellations of St. Jerome, or the other vagaries of diseased brains which were once so prolific an inspiration to Christian art, keeping its types as coarse and low as the habits of the misguided converts themselves! In principle, asceticism was meant to be a reaction against pagan sensuality. Christianity was right in idea, but wrong in carrying it to such an extreme in practice. The aim of the pagan artist had been an easier one, and his task more pleasing. The ascetic Christian artist, in trying to portray the supremacy of spirit over the flesh had a holier intent and a more difficult treatment before him. Instead of depicting sensuous beauty, he was compelled to condemn it, on the principle that the body, instead of being the best

friend of life, was its most subtle foe. By studiously depreciating its functions, that harmony which by right exists between pure feeling and beautiful form, and which the classical artist obtained in one shape, was destroyed. Ignorance superadded to fanaticism often turned art into burlesque and disgust. For a time even the person of the Saviour was delineated in the coarsest and most emaciated manner, on the ground that his career was one of humiliation, and his death a degradation. Literally his effigy must be shown to believers as a poverty-stricken man of sorrows; as ignoble in looks as in condition and fortune while living. It was not until classical forms and traditions again began to influence art that it learned how to give more congenial forms to spiritual aspirations. Unfortunately, before these were perfected, art was seduced into a preference for merely mechanical excellence devoid of any connection with the purer and more profound motives that first inspired its technical regeneration. The Greek perfected his work in accordance with the motives which inspired it, holding fast to the high standard he had created for a prief period. But the mediæval artist never completely reached his aim. Before a perfection of treatment corresponding to the Grecian had been fully attained, he passed into a stage that marked a decided decline, both of motive and execution. Christian art, as a whole, has been as fluctuating and disappointing as the experience of Christianity itself. We have yet to await their complete expression. Consequently no entirely equitable comparison can be drawn between the perfected classical art and the immatured results of its rival.

*Phases of Christian art: Catacombs; theological; religious; renaissance; modern.*

Christian art has passed through three phases, and is now in its fourth. First, that of the Catacombs. This was its infancy, when, animated by love and charity, the Christian mind was more desirous of winning than of forcing paganism to accept its ideas. Asceticism was still unborn. The sepulchral frescoes partake of the more cheerful pagan view of death, which excluded images of sadness and horror. They even borrow many of the heathen symbols. Spiritual in conception and allegorical in feature, these are of childlike simplicity of execution, and often so rude in design that except as an alphabetical beginning, they can scarcely be classified as art proper.

The second phase was the Theological, the Church having supreme sway over it, with what consequences asceticism shows in the pictorial and sculptured examples of mingled ignorance

and superstition that still survive. It lasted from the reign of the first Constantine to the thirteenth century.

At this period the Religious phase began. In the main, art was devoted to the Church, but partially free in its expression, stimulated by the intellectual activity that characterized this epoch, which in Italy terminated with the sixteenth century. Mind began to assert its long dormant rights in all departments of learning, leavening the new schools of art with fresh principles of growth. Two grand divisions came of this freedom. One took nature as its guide, profiting by the sparse examples of good antique art then known, but confining its choice of subjects almost exclusively to religious motives. The other was later in coming into vogue. It disinterred the debased models of antiquity to be its teachers, copying their forms without believing in their original vivifying spirit, and devoted itself zealously to the service of worldliness. In principle the new styles were an intellectual protest against the bigotry and dogmatism of strictly sacred art. They were particularly an incentive to polite learning and a broader mental culture than obtained under the narrowing influences of the dominant ecclesiasticisms. Singularly, too, they borrowed the Christian phrase "new birth," to characterize the enterprise of making again popular the æsthetic forms and associations of defunct paganism. We now interpret "Renaissance" in a broader view, as comprising the general advance of knowledge that began with the earliest movement of the Religious phase of art. Practically the later action was a fusion of pagan philosophy with modern skepticism at the period when the heads of the Church, licentious in habits and unbelievers at heart, turned both literature and art into instruments of self-glory and sensual gratifications.

If the investigation of heathen ideas had been an honest one, much moral as well as intellectual benefit might have come of it. We have since discovered how much there was of beauty and wisdom in the departed faiths. But at that time the god Pan gave no sign of life. The revival of classical learning being mixed up with so much hypocrisy of sanctity and the lying doctrine of God's elected rulers, instead of bringing clearly to light the virtues of paganism, put foremost its corrupting influences. Consequently, as the feeling which prompted it was largely false and vainglorious, so the results were similar.

A salutary sympathy with the belief of another, salutary because founded on the common instincts of humanity in prying

into the secrets of futurity to find therein repose in the present, comes as often from the untutored heart as the understanding enlarged by cultivation. Let me illustrate this by a fact which I can vouch for. The subject was a New England girl, not seven years old, born of Puritan parents, and trained in the strict manner of their sect. By chance she had found a book which told how much loved and honored the old gods of Greece once had been, but that now their images were looked upon as idols, and no one worshipped them. Pitying their disconsolate condition, she went into the woods near by, built a tiny altar of stones, decorated it with flowers and shells, laid on it her pet toys, and thus apostrophized the deposed chief of Olympus: "Poor old forgotten Jupiter, I love you; if nobody else will worship you, I will, dear old god, and you shall have my doll, and I will bring you flowers every day." Jove never received sincerer and sweeter homage from any Grecian maiden.

The fourth phase of Christian art was inaugurated with the Reformation. What that is, will appear when I treat of the schools nearer our own time. Meanwhile it will be apposite, to give a few illustrations of the essential differences, in character and execution, between classical and Christian art, in its first three phases. The comparison is unequal, inasmuch as the former is represented by detached or mutilated works, while the latter has the decided advantage of having much of its painting and sculpture still in the shrines for which they were designed, and the feeling in which they were conceived, yet active even in Protestant minds.

In which, as a unity, are the true spirit and purpose of art best exemplified?

*Spirit and purpose of pagan and Christian art compared.*

Rightly to answer this, we must first get at the relative inferiority or superiority of the underlying idea. Next, its degree of identification with the object itself. As this is exact and harmonious, and the motive pure and elevated, to that extent the art is perfected. Infants are called artless, because body and mind, in action correspond so naturally and spontaneously. In the same sense, art becomes artless, whenever the external means expresses equally as well its inward thought.

The group of the Laokoön, is one of those rare examples of Greek sculpture which represents intense physical and mental suffering. Observe with what nice discrimination the sculptor makes the moral of their death more noticeable than its bodily

anguish! We foresee what must come of their terrible position, but are spared any visible rack of flesh. Even a gleam of hope arises in the spectator's mind, as he sympathizes in the father's unspoken appeal to Heaven for his sons, suffering for his sin. There are no vehement, muscular writhings to disturb the pity felt for his fate, or admiration of his courageous struggle to escape. If Max Müller be correct in saying that the original meaning or root of the name of this heroic-pathetic sculpture is symbolical of "sin" or the throttler, then it teaches a great moral truth, besides being so elevated in treatment. Although violent action is foreshadowed, the time is so skilfully chosen as to suggest a moment's pause in the awful doom, relieving the otherwise over-exercised emotions.

The "Dying Gladiator" of Byron, and that of the Capitol at Rome, are two artistic creations, the former being purely ideal and the latter thoroughly realistic art. This is simply a naked man, dying slowly from the effects of a stab in his side. The merit does not consist in the poet's vision, in his features of a home on the Danube and children at play, but in its accurate anatomy, skilful pose, and thorough subjection of every detail, each consummately done, to the main object of truthfully expressing this form of death, in its purely physical aspect of limbs and features. Any spiritual or poetical significance comes from the spectator's mind, not the work itself. That so much speculation has arisen, is due to the artist's having kept his motive, a very common one in all art, so thoroughly in subjection to the æsthetic laws, that regulated Grecian treatment of pain. Without aiming to touch the imagination by manifest means of mental characterization, the heathen sculptor succeeds in so doing to a far greater extent than does the Christian artist, in his ordinary representations of dying martyrs, whose forms of death he expressly desires to impress on the spectator's mind, as connected with the loftiest spiritual aspirations. And this difference is the result of managing details, with a different motive and end in view. The Greek subordinates even horror, suffering, and agony to his theory of the æsthetically pleasurable, and scientifically perfect in art, while the Christian, keeping uppermost in mind his ascetic doctrines, made poverty, emaciation, torture, or whatever was repugnant to the natural man, most apparent, as the appointed means of final beatitude. [illegible] wished to dignify, the other to debase the body. Ra[illegible] Sebastian in the Uffizi, in form and expression, is one

most beautiful specimens of Christian painting, but it would be as much improved even in view of its ecstatic motive, had the painter omitted the arrows sticking in the saint's body, as the Gladiator would be deteriorated, had its sculptor left a sword buried in the now scarcely discernible wound, and the legs convulsed with pain. One system appeals to the finest intellectual faculties; the other to the coarsest material sensations. St. Lawrence broiling on his gridiron, St. Agnes with her bosoms flayed, or any martyrs in the moment of their extremest agony, are certainly not suitable motives for art; nor do I believe that their pictorial representations help mankind towards heaven, any more than do public executions, torture, or slaughter of any sort. Pagan art in this respect, in lesser matters, was more salutary than Christian. But when we come to the grossest materialism of the last, pagan example is still brighter. The effect of the materialistic view of spiritual dogmas was every whit as disastrous to the human mind as the lowest sensualism of heathendom. That terrible imagery of fiery torments, which harrows the imagination of docile faith, grew out of it, culminating in the Christian hell, with its countless population of indescribable fiends of insatiable appetites, whose sole occupation was to agonize through eternity whomsoever the Church refused to absolve; demon and sinner being under the domination of a supreme Devil, who was the rival of God. The cruelest pagan never conceived so prolific a world of horrors for the vilest wretch, as did the Christian preacher, in his professed love of his neighbor's soul. When I record this atrocious theological invention in plain words, just as I have heard it preached from Protestant pulpits, and seen it depicted by Catholic artists, I can scarcely credit them myself. But alas, I have also too often witnessed its baleful effects, in producing gloom and insanity in weak natures, cruelty and fanaticism in the unquestioning, and indifference or infidelity in the strong, not to denounce any art which devotes itself to diabolism.

Nevertheless I would not prohibit the representation of the effects of sin, or of symbolizing the evils of vile passions, or even of inventing an imagery to prefigure the conditions of wretched souls, whose shapes may be conjectured to correspond to their varied guilt, and likewise to depict the forms of those beings in another state with whose criminal desires their own are in affinity, calling them Beëlzebub or other appropriate name. Such art is legitimate, and can be made morally efficacious, if it does not

relapse into abnormal extremes, which, materializing overmuch the current notions of either heaven or hell, defeat its spiritual intent, and provoke reaction against faith itself.

The sculptor Hiram Powers, about thirty years ago invented and exhibited in America a panoramic hell of the Calvinistic pattern, which was much lauded for its artistic ingenuity and salutary religious influences. But it was worse than the painted debaucheries of torment of mediæval conceptions; for it not only put into lively action sulphuric flames tended by horned and tailed devils with costumes and pitchforks after orthodox patterns, aided by loathsome serpents and other terrifying monsters, but also presented the livid faces and blood-streaming shapes of the lost, including children, whose cries appalled the visitors, while their ears were stunned by the clanking of chains, and whatever dire noises that could contribute to the frightfulness of the scene. This is a humiliating fact to record for the intelligence of the nineteenth century of so-called Christian life, but a useful one in showing how art can be perverted when given into the charge of fanaticism.

To intellectual persons, Dante's "Inferno" has an inner sense of lofty, spiritual meaning, but to the common mind it embodies the popular, material notions of future retribution. In this he is the great prototype of mediæval sacred art, just as Milton's wars in heaven, though derived from Catholic sources, have become the traditionary lore of Protestantism, and as the Iliad of Homer was the bible of classical art. Protestant sects having ever held the art of the Roman Church in the same aversion that that held the pagan, they can show but little themselves of a religious character. With them the painted *word* made flesh was an abomination; the verbal WORD everything. Hence, although the difference is one of form only and not of idea, in treating religious art, I must confine my examples to the sect that used it in plastic and pictorial shapes.

Niccola Pisano, Orgagna, Fra Angelico, Luca Signorelli, and Michael Angelo, taught by Rome, were the chief masters who put into form and color the poem of Dante, in so sincere and terrible a manner that even now few can view their works without dismay. What must have been their effect on those who accepted the images of hell as matter of fact! Michael Angelo mingled, in his "Last Judgment," some of the classical ideas concerning Hades. But how feeble they seem beside the intenser horrors of the Christian belief. What a contrast, too, between the

chaotic movement and exaggerated limbs, and denunciatory passion of his prodigious figures, and the majestic repose and purity of form of those of Phidias! Fettered by his ignoble belief in the popular demonism, the great Italian becomes morbidly earnest in his endeavor to foreshadow the material aspects of the most fearful event that could haunt the imaginations of believers, and tighten the hold of the Church on their consciences.

Although the range of Greek art was limited in comparison with that of its successor, it was far more mindful of æsthetic law in its choice and treatment even of sacred topics. The sculptures of the Parthenon, its best extant examples, mutilated though they be, establish this fact. Theseus is a fellow-being far on his way to divinity; godlike in heroic intent, beautiful strength, and latent power. It is by such chiselled sermons that Phidias makes known the immortality of the human kind. They are a sort of final revelation of man's idealisms or ultimate capacity of beauty of form and mind; the only sort of beatified saint recognized in Grecian mythology, of which inferior examples are seen in the "Venus de Milo," Neapolitan "Flora," "Apollo Belvidere," and their like, which last unfortunately has reached our times only in a weak Roman copy. Ancient statuary of the highest order would gain in effect if left as found; for modern restoration of limbs or parts of members, as is specially noticeable in the "Venus" of the Tribune, the "Laokoön," and the false head of the "Flora" invariably mars the unity of spirit and form of the original work.

Examples of those physical and intellectual qualities that most dignify men and women, and best connect them with the mythological ideas of divinity, are still familiar to the world in the marble guise of a Juno, Venus, Mars, Hercules, Bacchus, Jupiter, and the other gods of Olympus. They are supernal beings, but on a different basis from the artistic creations of Christianity, which were more abstract and spiritual in functions, more removed from human organizations, having their origin, existence, and duties wholly in the celestial spheres; the only exception in way of assuming the ordinary form of man being in the case of the Son of God, for a specific purpose. The classical gods or demons are always clothed in human form, and are virtuous or vicious according to the unregenerated human standard of morals. In fine, they were individuals to the common mind, whatever might be the true meaning of the original myth or conception from which their personality sprung. Doubtless

much of this familiar understanding of them was due to the artistic genius which so skilfully and harmoniously interblended the ideal motive with the ideal form, and, by means of sensuous beauty, made it popular with the masses. The first conceptions of divinity of the Romans, borrowed from the Etruscans, were abstractly spiritual, as we notice in their temples dedicated to Modesty, Honor, and the virtues in general, with the spirits they believed to preside over the actions of men. But Grecian anthropomorphism finally overcame the abstract motives of Rome. Nor can we wonder at the triumph of the sensuous principle, as men in general conceive of things, when we look upon the finest specimens that came of it in art. How vividly the "Antinoüs" of the Capitol, in the "white silence" of his fine form, says, "Admire me, for I am truly handsome, and beloved of gods and men;" not in the vulgar self-sufficiency which comes of silly vanity, but with modest consciousness of his superior comeliness as a divine gift. We can enjoy the subtle beauty of antique art, independent of its religious association, which no longer concerns the world. But so perfect is some of pagan symbolism that the Christian fancy delights to perpetuate it. Cupid and Psyche still live in their original garb and meaning. The list might be extended to include other forms which have become so integral a part of our own poetry of life that we rarely confess our indebtedness to antiquity for them. But we cannot appropriate to ourselves Grecian thoroughness of art. The "Torso de Belvidere" reveals a skill that seems little short of the miraculous, so truthful is its anatomy, so vital its aspect, and so majestic its treatment. Although a much broken fragment, modern art despairs of its restoration, and wisely leaves it in its limbless perfection.

*Ideal art comparative. False art.*

The ideal of art is, however, comparative. One man's mastery is the far off horizon of another, beyond which for the moment he cannot see. So, too, the remote possibility of a second-rate mind is only the actual condition of a superior, whose idealisms would be a sealed book to the other. Unrealization is the bait that lures them on. Every man persistently hopes to win his final repose by perfect work, which always seems to be, but never is, within his reach. In this chase of the divine, no two minds advance exactly together. If we would rightly estimate our brother's motive and aim, this truth must be considered. Still, though the focus of vision in individuals ever varies, there are general principles applicable to all.

Work may be called excellent, even if there be inferiority in execution, if it suggests noble ideas or appeals profoundly to the emotions, and is kept in motive within the limits of truth and beauty. But that is false which compels the feelings to apologize for violations of the natural and probable on some principle removed from æsthetic choice.

Many examples of this character are forced on the sight by theological intoleration of the beautiful, and its cumbersome, unnatural symbolisms, such as the "Madonnas of the Bleeding Heart," and the "Seven Sorrows," with their ghastly wounds, and the various compositions known as "Pietas," in which the dead Christ is either represented as sitting in the lap of his mother, or stiffly stretched out on the knees of the Virgin and saints. Even symbolism is shorn of power when it assumes an eccentric or repulsive shape. Michael Angelo's marble "Pieta" is the finest and best treated of all these abnormal conceptions, but it is in itself an impossible event; for no mother ever could or would hold the naked, rigid corpse of a full-grown son, disfigured by numerous wounds, in her lap in such a flexible attitude, overburdened as she is herself with cumbersome drapery. Contrast the mourning mother in this position, with whatever fulness of meaning the theological idea may give to it, with the pathetic group of Niobe protecting her youngest child from the anger of a god, both akin in motive so far as each is made a sacrifice to appease divine wrath according to the commonly accepted beliefs, and decide whether the ascetic feeling and profound treatment of the Christian thought is to be preferred to the touching conception and more æsthetic treatment of the pagan artist!

There are two aspects to images of deities, pagan or Christian; one external and individual, as the representation of a supernal being who affects men for good or evil; the other figurative or impersonal, having an ethical, symbolical, or purely spiritual sense. The first chiefly moves the emotions; the latter, the intellect; the practical difference being the distinction that exists between abstract ideas and positive example as teachers of morality. Grecian philosophy finally killed Grecian mythology by constant questioning, while Christianity puts its stress on the heart rather than the head, striving to train men to think and do right in virtue of spontaneous faith instead of by force of logical conviction. Keeping this distinctive action in mind, it is not surprising, that while with paganism a decreasing belief in

the personality of its gods and goddesses, and an increasing one in their abstract character, should have weakened the power of its system of mythology as a means of moral government or of superhuman reliance in the trials of life, leaving the pagan mind open to skepticisms of every shade, the opposite bias of Christian teaching, cultivating feeling to excess, should have tended to constitute a new popular mythology, based on the personifications of the current virtues of the new religion, the worship of its saints and martyrs in their human forms, and the actual deification of its most important personages, such as Christ and his mother, who were made to replace God himself in the love and adoration of mankind. This mental revolution obeyed an organic law which was independent of creeds; one of which certain results could be predicated, whether the theology of the hour was derived from the Iliad, Koran, or the Bible. Hence in analyzing art as an element of civilization, we must not fail to observe those fundamental laws of human nature which regulate its generic forms, in order more clearly to detect the specific action of secondary influences; for instance, distinct classes of religious ideas, as distinguished from the instinct of religion itself.

Perhaps my thought may be clearer by saying that religion, love of the beautiful, and hunger for the ideal, are virtually common and coequal necessities of our souls, a sympathetic trinity of aspirations begetting eternal principles of art, but whose various shapes are simply the passing liveries of intellectual fashions. Both paganism and Christianity, while doing homage to art, have changed its material aspects for better or worse, according to the ruling thought or desire. Pursuing our retrospective inquiry, we find other elucidations of this statement.

*Diogenes. St. Jerome. Heathen and Christian grotesque. Pagan visions.*

I have shown how averse Greek art was to asceticism, but the bas-relief of "Diogenes in his Tub" forms almost an exception to the general rule. Yet how unlike the Christian sentiment! The philosopher chooses a populous city, wherein to exhibit his cynicism. Unlike the later hermit, he seeks an audience of men, not spirits; nor does he covet future bliss at the cost of present privation. This he assumes to display contempt of luxury and those honors his fellow-men most esteem. Alexander the Great can do no more for him than to stand out of his sunshine. Diogenes lives like a cur, to appear to be the most independent of

men. Philosophy, like religion, has its fanatics; but in the case in point,the actor did not care whether people imitated or despised him. Not less an egoist, the Christian hermit allowed them only the choice between hell-fire or doing what he did.

Compare the philosopher in his kennel with the "St. Jerome" of Agostino Carracci. also at Naples, and note the gulf which divides pagan and Christian asceticism. The saint is by himself in the wilderness where no human eye can witness his self-inflicted penances. He has fled from the sight of men to commune alone with his Maker, but bodiless devils torment him nevertheless, and he can escape their sensual persuasions only by kneeling naked on the bare rocks, and gashing his breast with a sharp stone until his blood stains the ground, in expiation of involuntary sin. He seeks no sunshine to warm his limbs, nor does he fortify his soul's endurance by a placid indifference to his fellow-men, but is so keenly alive to their spiritual welfare that the mental contemplation of their wordliness intensifies his own anguish as he wrestles with the Devil as much for them as himself.

The composition is unusually good for its school. There is no coarse display of suffering, which is hinted rather than expressed by the action of the anchorite, whose head and expression are well studied. The landscape is wild and sclemn; in keeping with the main motive, and the coloring equally in tone with its mystic sadness.

Heathen and Christian grotesque are also strikingly opposed in sentiment. The sensual, ludicrous, and fanciful obtain in the former, whereas in the other, there is more of mysticism and moral significance. One was invented as a light entertainment; the latter for a profound lesson. Nowhere is this more fittingly illustrated than in a fresco of the "Fall of Adam" by an unknown painter in the subterranean chapel of the late Certosa Convent, near Florence. Eve is handing the fatal fruit to Adam. Swiftly flying towards them, upborne by hideous wings, inclining to the woman, is a death's head with the lower jaw gone; a frightful image of impending evil.

Besides his devotion to beauty the classical artist had also to inspire him a faith in the miracles of his religion equally as sincere and well attested as the mediævalist had in his. To him likewise, by means of prayer and invocation, were vouchsafed approving visions of his deities as remarkable as those recorded by Christians. Fra Angelico was not more earnest in

his art and belief than many of his pagan brothers. Hercules showed himself to Parrhasius to be painted, as Wallace and other departed heroes appeared to Blake, or the Virgin to her numerous limners. There is abundant evidence to establish the fact that ecstatic inspiration has not been confined to the Roman Catholic artist; nor is it, of any creed, without ennobling effect on its art. In some occult way the imagination does secure a spiritual ideal quite above the ordinary standard of the intellect, and in one sense out of the limits of its laws and perceptions.

Pious ancients had as severe rules to preserve their religious art from unchaste influences as ever had the schools of Christendom, except the Spanish, which was controlled by the Inquisition. Grecian purists denounced the use of courtesans as models for goddesses as severely as did Savonarola the painters of his day for similar improprieties towards the Virgin. The nude or meretricious in sacred art came into favor in Christian Italy perhaps with even less opposition than in old Greece. While pagan faith remained single-minded, and was spiritually inclined, it loved to surround its pious dead or dying with consoling images like the "virgins ever young," symbols of immortal youth and beauty — pagan angels, we can call them. If the hope of the Greek in his future was less positive than the Christian's, neither was he affrighted by an equal fear of damnation.

We fail in adequately appreciating the pure art of Greece less from shortcomings of its own than from the impure examples which the Renaissance has so profusely produced in classical disguise, but which in reality are the bastard productions of debased Christian taste, and would be condemned by none more heartily than the Greeks themselves. Modern pagan art discredits the genuine all the more because of its being often mistaken for the antique. It is also to be seen everywhere, while the good ancient is accessible to few, and requires culture to comprehend. Campana's "*Opere Antiche in Plastica*," Rome, 1851, is remarkable for its illustrations of some of the finest classical compositions in terra-cotta, which were used in the ornamentation of Etruscan dwellings. By examining a few, we shall the better understand the purity of spirit and execution of the best ancient sculpture.

*Bacchus. Venus and Mars. Mercury. Menelaus and Helen.*

The popular idea of Bacchus or Dionysius is that of a hilarious, indecent reveller, usually tipsy, for which Rubens is largely accountable. Even Michael Angelo makes him the god of inebriety. In the

light in which he viewed his subject, that wonderful statue of Bacchus in the Uffizi is consummate art. It is true that no sottish drunkenness paralyzes those gleaming limbs as the wine he has just quaffed from the tremblingly upheld cup mounts to his brain, but the sense-bewildering stupor is visibly given. His head swims, eyelids droop, the lower lip falls, the body sways, legs yield, the mind reels, and the entire being is fast becoming the willing victim of the insidious drink. There is nothing forced or overdone in this statue, which combines the unity and finish of Grecian art with the vigorous naturalism of the Etruscan school.

Now let us look at the god as the Greeks knew him. Turn to plates 31 and 32 of Campana, Vol. II. The first gives the youthful Bacchus fêted; the second, sleeping. Both forms are elegant and refined, brimming with healthful joy in breathing "the breath of life." There is no sign of intoxication in the countenance of that perfect youth, smiling in his dreams. A faint touch of seriousness, as if the forecasting of life's maturer duties cast some shadow over life's young joys, may be seen in the exquisitely moulded features of the other. The closest scrutiny of either fails to detect aught in their conception or treatment that discredits man, religion, or art. While prefiguring the happiness founded on conscious health and right use of the gifts of the Creator, they appeal equally against their abuse. Even in the plates of the Bacchic rites there appears nothing sensual. Draped figures offer fruit and flowers to the sound of music in gratitude to their divine bestower.

Plate 104, representing Venus and Mars, rebukes the modern handling of this delicate subject. It harmoniously contrasts the beauty of the two sexes by a sort of rythmic flow of line and movement, Venus being draped so as to allow her graceful contours to be felt rather than shown, while Mars more fully exposes his heroic form; their joint attitudes being as chaste as dignified.

The lithe "Mercury" of Giovanni di Bologna is one of the finest poetical inventions after the antique that the Renaissance has produced. We have, however, only to place it beside the Grecian "Mercury" at Naples to detect how far it fails of high art. Not to mention the prominence given to mere muscular effort, the conceit of poising it on the breath of a zephyr, represented in a lump of bronze, would be tolerated only in an age which was pleased with the eccentricities of a Bernini, whose

facility of executing his far-fetched or superficial fancies blinded it to his obvious faults. Without any true choice of his own, he worked with equal zest on pagan or Christian topics, and, eager only to gain money and notoriety, lowered the artistic standard of both, without fitly representing the spirit of either. One of his extravagances, successfully wrought so far as concerns the telling of the tale in a picturesque manner, is the marble group of "Apollo and Daphne." She is turning into a tree, the leaves sprouting from her hair and fingers, just as the amorous god is seizing hold of her.

See also how the story of another flying couple is told by one of Campana's plates, No. 67. Menelaus and Helen are returning from Troy in a chariot drawn by four spirited horses of the Phidian type. The erring wife drives standing erect, with her gaze earnestly directed towards her bridal home; the light drapery gracefully caught up on her right arm follows the outlines of her beautiful figure in wave-like ripples as it is pressed back by the rapid movement. Age and sorrow are powerless to lessen her ever virgin loveliness. If her large, gentle eyes seem a little sad, they draw us closer to the repentant woman. Menelaus, a noble, gray-haired figure, stands behind, watchful and mournful, as he, too, recalls their past experience, with one hand resting for security on the shoulder of his wife, while the other presses against his side in sympathy with his severe thought.

The taste displayed in this terra-cotta must be seen, to be appreciated as it deserves. This and similar examples should be made commonly known, if only to make conspicuous the vast difference that exists between the current ideas of classical art derived from bastard Renaissant work and modern plagiarisms and the really fine antique, the nobility of which would consign all the false and worthless to the limbo of popular detestation. Even in its rarer realistic motives, taste was as severely pure, telling the story with Homeric dignity and simplicity, scrupulously avoiding unnecessary detail, adding no ornament for its own sake, but doing and saying much with few and simple means, the consummate unity of which, both as to execution and expression, constitutes their highest claim to noble art. No. 71 of the above series, "Ulysses recognized by his Nurse and Dog," is a precious example of Grecian composition answering to our *genre* subjects.

*Repose in art. Duke Giuliano.*

No attribute of classical art is more obvious than its repose or reserved strength. Most modern work

seems exhausted by the creative effort, and suggests the limits of the artist's power rather than the illimitation of art itself. This is more apparent in the later Rennaissant than in its earliest period. Nevertheless, Christian art has some special triumphs. One of the chief is the statue of Duke Giulano, miscalled "Lorenzo" his nephew, whose real statue is that which commonly bears the uncle's name in the guide-book descriptions of the Chapel of the Medici at Florence. Rightly is it named "Il Penseroso," for the stone *thinks*. It is as profoundly suggestive as the finest classical work. Indeed, the subtile idealism of this broadly treated statue lies in its mental repose or impersonification of concealed thought which suggests sphinx-like problems of human fate. Neither this nor its companion are of particular value as portraits, although their style is replete with vigorous realism. They display in a grand way the vast resources of Michael Angelo's genius, which could thus make out of very ordinary subjects, for neither of the brothers was in any wise a remarkable man, monuments that would do honor to the greatest characters. Possibly a latent satire was intended in the contrast between the real and the marble dukes.

*Michael Angelo's "Night and Morning." Moses.*

The recumbent colossal figures belonging to these monuments are indeed creations of the robust, spiritualized Etruscan stamp, with a unity of allegorical meaning, deeply affecting in its bearing on the tyranny of the ruling family that ordered them. We miss in them somewhat of the severe simplicity and repose of "Il Penseroso," but they are in admirable harmony with its enigmatical thought. Nothing can exceed them in intensity of enigma. The spectator gives it a personal, historical, or abstract interpretation, according to his own mood; but Michael Angelo indignantly flung his riddle in stone to his betrayed, apathetic countrymen, to be solved as they liked, while he hid its key in his own wounded soul. Like all immortal speech, it speaks as forcibly to-day as it did three hundred years ago, and, as time rolls on, with vaster meaning as men rise to the level of the artist's mind. Meantime these effigies appear like beings of superhuman origin, coffined in unsympathetic matter, half-awaiting, half-struggling for their new birth.

Michael Angelo's "Moses" likewise is more akin to the primitive Etruscan types of ideal characterization than to the Grecian. The lawgiver is an awe-inspiring being, of stupendous

organization, wielding the thunders of Jehovah, whose messenger he is to a stubborn, backsliding people. His office is to command, not persuade. Mark that he is the rough Moses of barbarous times, not the meek Moses of ours! Those heavy and coarse lines, the excessive muscle, and the sternly emphasized features throughout, do not agree with the common notion of the man who led the Israelites up out of Egypt; but the sculptor rightly conceives him as the messenger from Sinai, fresh from the thunders and lightnings of their Lord God, with the stone commandment in his hand, and the divine threats on his face, if his people broke them. Maybe the sublimity of the conception is weakened by the mystical horns, denoting superhuman functions, on the head of Moses. But the sculptor has not the pliable resources of the palette to aid his symbolization, which as in the golden nimbus of the older painters, or the transfigured atmosphere of the later, suggests harmoniously with the whole picture the celestial glory which clairvoyant eyes see around inspired persons. Consequently the supernatural which can be made so effective in the one may cause the failure of the sublime in the other, because of its difference in material. The Greeks, however, did often depart from the truths of nature to symbolize their deities or add to their majestic look. Whether Michael Angelo with this precedent in view to legitimize his use of the horns, has succeeded as well in his intent for "Moses" as they did for Jupiter, each critic must judge for himself. The practice seems questionable in either.

Thus far the best exhibit of Christian art falls between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, which constitute the emphatic period of the religious phase. In sincerity of purpose, originality of expression, and loftiness of aim, it compares favorably with the soundest period of pagan art. It seems strange that the beautiful art of Greece should have been succeeded in the same race by one so sterile and disagreeable as the Byzantine. But this goes to show that art itself is less dependent on blood or climate than on intellectual influences. The religious idea was the germ which made pagan art supremely beautiful while guided by its mythological notions; the same idea made Christian painting superlatively formal and unæsthetic, when controlled by asceticism, and finally becoming iconoclastic, utterly drove sculpture out of the country in which it had risen to its highest eminence.

*How good and bad art acts.*

Bad art acts after the instinct of the venomous reptile, which fascinates before it poisons. While nothing is surer to avenge its own debasement because of its appeal to the senses, good art, with equal instinctive action, expands and ennobles the mind. Good art, bad art, and no art, all depend on the human will. If an authority like that of the Eastern Church could almost annihilate it in Greece, or a Protestant preacher like Fox banish it from human culture in a sect, or a patronage like that of the Renaissance revive it only to manifest its capacity of luxurious, vainglorious sensuality, we may be certain that art only needs the right kind of stimulus with any people to make it highly instrumental in promoting their welfare. The sooner we rid ourselves of the notion that art by itself is the cause of the corruption and downfall of nations, the better. It no more causes their destruction than it does their existence. In either event it is a phenomenon which marks national destiny, an effect more than a cause. If mind incline to æsthetic culture, and be dominated by any special desires or ambitions, it will manifest them by means of art-forms whose moral aspects will respond to the prevailing feeling, whatever it is. Whenever the common mind demands the indecent, vulgar, or meretricious, it gets it in pagan or papal Rome, Catholic France, or Protestant Holland, irrespective of the prohibitions of creeds, unless, as in Spain, the temporal and ecclesiastical powers acting in conjunction have sufficient force to stifle every manifestation of the popular will not acceptable to them. Art may represent, and in that way aid to extend vice, virtue, or religion, but it does not create them. Whenever impressed in their exclusive service, it is forced just so far out of its own legitimate being.

The Western Church took an opposite course to the Eastern, but none the less undertook to control art, by favoring sculpture and advising beautiful types for the Saviour. But Rome, having lost its skilled Grecian and Etruscan artists, did not know how to accomplish this end. For many centuries art in Italy continued to be ruder than in the East, where there existed at Constantinople, to the time of its capture by the Turks, a degenerate school, which adhered to some of the traditions and technical treatment that obtained in better days. But while the Byzantine empire held fast to its uniform methods, there came a reaction to Italy in the thirteenth century which gave an altogether fresh appearance to its art. The new style resembled

*The new style of Italy. Christian mythology.*

that of ancient Rome derived from Etruria, in its round, stout forms, proneness to picturesque composition, variety of detail, vigorous movement, and sturdy individualism. Greek art, by sacrificing individuality of character in detail overmuch to idealization of form in the mass, produced, both in architecture and sculpture, a certain monotony of executive expression opposed to the greater latitude of method and more robust design of the indigenous Italian schools. The Greek artist required the utmost nicety of touch to attain those imperceptible, delicate curves, graduated to that exact anatomical truth which was requisite to the perfect harmony in form and exalted intellectual aspiration, which were the foundations of his theory of idealization; but the Italian of the Etruscan stamp was more prosaic in his apprehension of the requirements of art. He based his theory more on the human-actual; his lines were harder and less flexible, more directed towards the governing movement or expression, and less to beauty of contours; his proportions were less exact; his symmetry less perfect; in short, his was the "terrible manner" of Luca Signorelli or Buonarotti, as opposed to the nobility of style of Phidias or the seductive grace of Praxiteles. But while the Byzantine lost his freedom in the mazes of mysticism, his rival, feeding his knowledge anew from nature and the antique, with refreshed brain and hand, gained the vacated throne of art. With it he secured an influence almost equal to that which his profession enjoyed in its prime in antiquity; such, perhaps, in intensity and completeness over all classes of society, as the world will not again see, because it can never be put back to a similar condition.

Before the invention of printing, art was the sole literature of the masses. They were trained by it to see as the church and state would have them believe. The essential forces of things, whether of religion, government, family, or the individual, were imaged in the external. Hence, authority, wealth, and rank of every sort entered into a contest of æsthetic display. Life was made up of lavish show and blood-stirring rivalries on the part of the ruling castes, and of hard knocks and intense emotions of the poorer classes. Few of the lords of Italian towns, and not many popes of those days, if tried by modern law, would escape death or imprisonment. Crimes were then regarded as grand passions, uncomfortable to the victim, though a necessary perquisite of rank. Politics were a

game of heads and property. What with a gorgeous ritual, an equally gorgeous style of aristocratic life, magnificence of state on the surface, and a stormy sea of passions around him, the artist had the best possible stimulus constantly before his eyes.

Although Christianity had extinguished the hostile mythology, it did not succeed in eradicating the feeling that had given rise to it. Before books had made general education more practicable, and by teaching men to think, gradually weaned them from inane idolatry, and consequently to a greater reliance on abstract ideas than on images for their intellectual sustenance, it may have been impossible for any sect to have counteracted the popular tendency to superstition. Be this so or not, a new mythology had sprung up, in spiritual aspiration higher and in morality purer than the pagan, but which left men as prone to idolatry as ever. Though names were changed, their inclinations remained as they had been. There was no argument a devout Romanist could use for his rites that had not been given with equal force by pious heathen for theirs. In either case the popular faith gave a prodigious impulse to art, chiefly in causing a demand for sacred images, which speedily became objects of stolid worship to the crowd. So charitable in practice was the Christian priest to the old worship which he verbally denounced, that he kept for his own rites a copious share of the dead forms of paganism. This may have been a politic concession to their adaptability to the new uses. To art it was a boon in variety and richness of its subject-matter.

The main features of the Christian mythology in its ecstatic or LOVE aspect, as distinguished from the ascetic, or that of FEAR, which have been already noted, are substantially these. As an abode for the blessed and the new deities there is a heaven, substituted for the pagan Olympus, more vague as to locality and with less variety of enjoyment. Morally considered, it was an Olympus cleansed of carnality. Architecturally, a new Jerusalem; a holy city "coming down from God," glorious beyond description, paved with pure gold "as it were transparent glass," and abounding in all manner of precious stones; each gate "one solid pearl;" within, music, the song, water of life "clear as crystal," and trees that bear fruit "for the healing of the nations." Most lovely is this city revealed to St. John. Can art reveal it to our senses? Surely it might do better than its ordinary hierarchal composition, so like in arrangement to the old notions in regard to the Homeric gods, only more formal

and orderly; singularly uninviting too, when compared with the type given in Revelation. Rows of the dignitaries of the Church, martyrs, saints, prophets, and apostles sitting on clouds, on each side of the Triune God, represented by two distinct persons and one emblem, or by one form with three faces and the god-mother; sometimes cumbersomely draped or unseemly naked; a solemn council watching the condemnation of sinners, and the coming of the saved to join them in chanting praises to the Supreme and the Son who sit majestic in their midst: such was the average idea art gave of the new heavens. It really looks as if it could not get the old paganism wholly out of its mind.

*The art-heaven.*

But there is a more original and pleasing view to the new religious art. It had two copious sources of motives, one in the ideas and emotions more properly belonging to the revealed faith, and the other in its great store of legends and traditions. Bible history in the main was of too remote a period, besides belonging to a despised race, to possess that direct influence over the people that the stories of their own saints had, whose images were constantly before their eyes, whose lives were held up as their own rule of piety, and the pressure of whose conventual institutions came daily home to them. Hence, although the old Judaic chronicles did afford to the artists some of their most important compositions, this source of inspiration was meagre compared with more recent sacred history, or with the physical sufferings of Christ, which were the most popular topics, until driven somewhat into the background by the worship of the Virgin and the themes derived from her apocryphal biography. Their intent and spirit, however, were far more elevated than the motives which came directly from the ordinary ascetic feeling. They were intended to represent the unsurpassable sacrifice of the Saviour and his deified mother, growing out of their love for men, and by contrasting its height, depth, and degree with human ills, in the light of a glorious resurrection from the grave, practically shown them by Him whom they crucified, but were now able to behold as their heavenly King; by this immense contrast of self-sacrifice with acquired bliss as a lesson and hope for themselves, they were to become reconciled to an existence beset with pain, toil, and disappointment. Even the joy-loving Greeks recognized the uses of seeming evils as guides to wisdom. Their philosophy was not wholly a theory of pleasure. Hear what Æschylus says: "For Zeus leads men in the way of

wisdom: he orders that suffering should be our best school." This is sound Christian sentiment, but foreign in meaning and application to the distorted views of rigid ascetics. The great distinction, therefore, between them and those who interpreted the ways of Providence in the sense of the words of Æschylus or the acts of Christ, as shone by art, is particularly seen in the diverse sentiments of Fear and Love as influencing life. Fear provided the Hell before described. It drove men to the companionship and habits of brutes in the wilderness; like the Indian fakirs, to court and invent sufferings and glory in them, not as leading to wisdom, for they began and ended in folly, but to ensure reward. The greater spiritual insight of Love taught men that Christ's heaven must be won by following his example of self-denial; preferring others; by mixing with mankind, not by avoiding them; by suffering, if it needs be, for truth and justice; by wisely preferring, whenever called to choose, joys eternal to pleasures temporal. This was the true "way of wisdom" that Zeus, or God, ordained and the ordering He gave to suffering to persuade men to enter into it.

*Wisdom through suffering.*

One of the most strenuous efforts of Christian art has ever been to express in the human countenance the consciousness of having obtained "the way of wisdom" through suffering. This has given rise to a special idealism confined to a few painters and sculptors, who felt in their own hearts the emotions they depicted, and lived the lives that begot them. Their cognizance of the immortal and spiritual apprehension of men, as separated from the temporal and material, was as complete as mortals can have. Ecstatic visions left in their souls a lovely apprehension of divine things, which they transferred to their art. Their clairvoyant views of celestial imagery thus became palpable truths to the people. So beautiful are their happiest efforts that we involuntarily overlook technical shortcomings in their profound suggestion of things beyond the sphere of earth, and of a joy that comes only from believing intensely. As there can be no worldly standard whereby to test them, like all creative art of the highest quality, they must be interpreted by their own rules of composition.

It was but natural that there should be this rebound in ideas and imagery from the attempts to familiarize the religious mind with the material horrors of hell. In both cases the imaginations of artists were stimulated to portray supernatural degrees of each. I do not know that I have seen the most

terrifying pictures of eternal torment that Oriental art, chiefly of Persia and India, the parent-countries of the doctrine, has produced; but the lust of Eastern imagination in this direction, that has met my view, frightfully repulsive as it is in its ingenuity of tortures and diabolism, has never equalled the Christian. The condition of men in the next world, as defined by the tenets of the Church, and their experiences in securing salvation, offered an inexhaustible variety of new and strange motives, and also opened to art a field of action more elevated in sentiment and comprehensive in range than had ever been shown to the pagan mind. Beauty was divested of earthly qualities, and clad in a celestial garb; used not to express the pleasure of man in himself, but as a token of the divine pleasure in him as a being born anew through the agency of the Holy Spirit. For the first time men were made to feel, by the medium of painting and sculpture, that there was in store for them eternal joy and surpassing peace.

Those who have not looked with sympathetic feeling on the finest examples of this exceptional and short-lived art, may consider as exaggerated even a tame allusion to them. I confess it is difficult for me to view them without experiencing a rapture akin to theirs. To those who do not appreciate their devout spirit and singleness of purpose, they are a "stumbling-block and foolishness." The spectator requires to be lifted by his own imagination into a condition of mind that with the artist, as the seer, owes its being to direct influx from a higher world. Images of celestial things are results of affinities of the soul drawing them down to it — an illumination of mind from the Great Spirit itself. Earthly models become of secondary significance. The informing life of any supernal art must descend from above.

*Fra Angelico, Niccola, Pisano, Masaccio, Ghiberti, and their successors.*

Fra Angelico is a representative artist of this class. Others have surpassed him in certain technical details, but none have carried art as a whole farther in this direction. He has succeeded as none other in making visible the immaculate chastity and tenderness of the Madonna, the ecstatic joy of martyrs and the elect as they enter paradise carpeted with fragrant flowers and bright with the smile of God; his are the purest and loveliest angels that welcome the saved; the most gracious and winning archangels in their panoplies of resplendent gems: in short, his was the eye that best penetrated the state of soul that gives to

men and objects their most precious spiritual endowment. Certain of his works can only be compared to the marvellous echo of the Baptistery at Pisa, which seems like a chorus of angels, answering out of the spheres the cry of humanity to the "Father who is in heaven."

Sublimity is not the forte of Fra Angelico, neither is strength nor force. It is only in that single-minded art which expresses divine love and the sweetness of saving sacrifice that he excels. His style is the exact impress of his own monastic habits and feeling, and cannot be said to owe anything to Etruscan or Grecian influence.

This is not the case with Niccola Pisano, nearly two centuries earlier, to whom sculpture owes a revival in Italy, similar to that which Giotto a little later gave to painting. They originated those schools which attained their climax in the productions of Leonardo, Raphael, and Michael Angelo, and which occupied themselves chiefly with the scenes and personages of the Christian mythology. Their manner was decidedly Etruscan, showing that the national feeling had survived through all political changes, and whenever the indigenous art had liberty of action it instinctively clung to its fundamental characteristics in preference to the Grecian. Giotto's studies were more directly from nature than those of Niccola, who took up sculpture just where the Romans left it when paganism began to recoil before Christianity. In form he is guided by the antique, but his ideas are taken from his religion, while his taste in composition is realistic, crowding his panels with short, rounded figures, as was the old manner, and sometimes appropriating them directly from Etruscan sculpture.

The second great impulse was given by Masaccio to painting, and by Ghiberti to sculpture. Both delighted in the picturesque, giving to accessories and backgrounds their right place in composition, treating them with the same attention that the previous masters had bestowed only on dominant features. This was due to an advanced knowledge of perspective and anatomy. But the practice which made painting a more complete and truthful representation of objects was misapplied by Ghiberti to sculpture, who sought to give to it that variety of detail, aerial distance and foreshortening which can only be properly rendered by the sister-art. The skill shown in the bronze gates of the Baptistery at Florence all but redeems his innovation. Compare them, however, with the frescoes of Masaccio in the Car-

mine, and it will be seen how unwise it is for sculpture to go out of its own sphere in an attempt to rival painting.

Donatello's manner is opposed to that of Ghiberti. His severe realism, broad, vigorous modelling, and effective character and movement, apart from ideal form, make up a thorough and masterly embodiment of the primitive Etruscan feeling modified to original Christian types. St. George of Orsanmichele has no special nobility of form, and only a rather commonplace head, but the statue quivers with intrepid passion. Every chisel-stroke on that soul-lit marble gleams knightly defiance to wrong. His St. Johns and Magdalens are effective examples of ascetic sculpture, almost repulsive in their coarse expression of life, but truthful and earnest.

A counterpart to him in dramatic force, as shown in painting, is seen in Piero della Francesca, whose frescoes in St. Francesco at Arezzo are among the finest of this prolific epoch. There is a Madonna of the Annunciation, thoroughly Shakespearian in conception — Lady Macbeth in pose and feature; certes no woman of tender sorrow and self-forgetting love. His legend of the "Finding of the Cross by Queen Helena" has vigorous characterization; less beauty and grace than D. Ghirlandajo's elaborately varied compositions, but a greater capacity of seizing upon the story and concentrating attention on its main points. He composed his figures less to exhibit themselves than to do his bidding. Ghirlandajo's practice is the contrary. Both disregard local truths, and impress contemporary costumes and personages into their service, or invent, as best suits their purpose.

In purity of form, harmony of composition, ecstatic joy, and general spirituality, Lucca della Robbia's own works in enamelled terra-cotta take rank with the pictures of Fra Angelico. For life-like realism and genuine, spontaneous action and expression, his bas-reliefs in marble of the singing boys, now in the Uffizi gallery, are unmatched. A delightful artist of great executive calibre was not altogether lost to the world by his abandoning marble for the more flexible clay, — which he made equally imperishable by the secret of the stanniferous glaze which goes by his name, — but was obscured in a field of secondary importance.

The inborn feeling of Raphael is for classical beauty and grace. In this he is the greatest exception of his country. Perugino in a weaker and somewhat ascetic way, affected the graceful, but his is a manner that does not comport well with

the sterner requirements of Christian art. The impressible temperament of Raphael made him capable of noble art in any style. It is, however, in compositions like the "Galatea," "Cupid," "Psyche," and "Marsyas," which are vital with the spirit of the antique, that he is most himself.

Leonardo da Vinci best combines the good points of previous schools, without being carried away by the prevailing tendencies of any one. Titian and Correggio produced more splendid results from given means in color than he did; Michael Angelo also excelled him in design and intensity of meaning, and Raphael in variety and facility of invention. Each threw more of himself into his art than Leonardo did, but Titian least of all.

Michael Angelo alone was governed by deep religious sentiment. The others were as readily impressed by antique or secular motives as by those more properly belonging to the Christian belief. When their desires had free range, they went gladly to sensuous beauty or the expression of human life in its worldly and sumptuous aspects. Even ascetic or spiritual topics were by them used as occasions to exhibit their magic coloring and power of design rather than the special significance of their nominal creeds, which set lightly on them all, though outwardly conforming to the established rites.

Leonardo seems to have been without any special bias. His taste was catholic and impartial. He could paint a voluptuous Leda or chaste Virgin with equal skill and coolness. If he were cold to the incentives of religion, he had no more warmth for the fascinations of love. But he did have a sagacious estimate of the scientific capacity of art, and obtained in it as profound a mastery over form as Titian over color. His knowledge being complete and thorough, no one could better direct its powers to a perfect delineation of an historical or illustrative composition, and the acute development of individual character in a harmonious unity of feeling and action with his central motive. He did this, not from an inward creative consciousness of the thing itself, as with men of the Fra Angelico and Michael Angelo stamp, but from observation and mental analysis and synthesis. The "Last Supper" at Milan was as masterly a specimen of scientific eclecticism in art as the religious period produced; indeed, its finest. It combined the sound elements of Grecian and Etruscan art into a new and original whole. Probably no artist of any age ever produced a work which, in comparison with existing examples, so nearly

carried art at one effort to perfection in design, composition, and character. Unfortunately, owing to the mistaken choice of wall-surface and injudicious use of vehicles, its consummate excellence can only be suggested by mutilated remains and modern engravings. Whether in its prime it had the same power to touch the heart that it has ever had to interest the intellect, the world now can never know. It is sad to find that the subtle touches which bestow on fine works their greatest merit, which best indicate the animating thought, and confer a claim to immortality, are those which jealous Time most quickly destroys. These tiny signs of sounds which tell the reader this, have more power to preserve and perpetuate the soul of things than all the pictorial and plastic art the world has ever seen or will see; for they convey the abstract idea direct to the imagination, which forms out of its own boundless idealism, untrammelled by limitations of material, a more complete picture than any made up from resisting matter.

*Christian mythology.*

I apply the term mythology to Christianity in no invidious sense, but as I would if discussing, with an Athenian of the time of Pericles, the causes which led to the making carved images of his national deities and their idolatrous worship; also the origin of the extravagant and often immoral fables which had so obscured the purer religious notions of his ancestors. Looking back on the objective effect of religion on the minds of those races most under the influence of the art of Christianity, I find a condition of things not unlike to paganism. Image-worship has a natural sequence of rites as well as fellowship of ideas in all times. The present fashion is to adore effigies of the Madonna and the crucifix, keeping lamps ever burning before them. In the fifth century the popular idol worshipped in this way was that wretched fanatic, St. Simone, the original pillar saint, whose statuettes were everywhere to be seen, just as a few centuries previous were those of the excellent Marcus Aurelius, who was likewise worshipped as a household deity. The adoration paid the filthy saint is only one of many instances of the silliness of mankind in worshipping those who look contemptuously down on them, noticing the crowd only to accept gifts and homage, in return voiding their excrements on the heads below, morally and not unseldom, as with St. Simone, actually. A fakir gazes at his navel until he sees God in it, and the stupid multitude take him at his word. So, too, do tyrants of the "divine right" stamp.

Lustily claiming themselves to be anointed of divinity, the mean-hearted sycophants around them, for wages in kind, shout amen, and the dirty lie gets imposed on the world as a glorious fact.

There has been a constant disposition to multiply material objects of worship, to substitute marvellous stories for simple truths, to encourage popular superstition instead of popular education, and to make spirituality in faith give way to abject idolatry. Nothing remains long sacred to the ignorant, that is not invested with the mysterious or unintelligible. So-called miracles are the only accepted divine revelations. Crucifixes walk, fly, move. Pictures have tongues. Sometimes they wink in approbation; at others they vent their griefs in tears. Decapitated saints wander about with their heads under their arms. Pagan fraud and credulity find Christian imitators. Finally no story is too incredible, and no claim too preposterous, if the Deity be invoked to sustain it. Doubtless much of the degradation of religion was owing to the literal interpretation by the common mind of the coarser symbolisms of faith, and rude illustrations of art of the questionable traditions of the Church. The artist or even the priest may have meant one thing, and the crowd taken it for another. One fact, however, is apparent. The Church was more solicitous to drive people into its fold than to enlighten them afterwards. But I must exonerate the high art of this period, both from a disposition or tendency to misdirect the public faith. Its appeal was either to the spiritual or intellectual faculties. Much instruction and happiness came of it; much pious consolation too, undefiled by idolatrous error. Neither peasant nor prince was ever tempted to worship a statue of Michael Angelo, or a picture of Raphael; not even I think one of Civitali or of Giotto. Real genius escapes this desecration. The art that was and continues to be worshipped is of the most wretched quality, on a par with the minds of those on whom the Church still imposes it. A similar distinction between the effects of true and false art must have obtained in Greece. While the Phidian statues were objects of wonder and admiration to the whole heathen world for their artistic merits, the idols of the people were of a different pattern. Sacrifices were performed in the open air, that their incense might rise unobstructed to the Unseen, whose images the temples sheltered. But as the lust of power is common to all classes, I see no reason to think that the pagan priesthood in their

generations did any more to discourage the disposition to idolatry of the masses than has the papal clergy thus far in theirs. In either case the original conception of the object of art consecrated to religion could not have been unknown to them; but history has yet to show an established church sufficiently disinterested to interpret truly to the world at large the word or thing which embodies the essence of the Master's teaching, if it conflict with its vested interests or transmitted prerogatives.

The mental infirmity which leads to multiplying intermediatory divinities or intercessors between man and God, and of late in the Roman Church between him and the "Son," with a decided inclination at the present time to make the "Mother of God" the final source of consolation and appeal, is common to our race. It has been my lot to pass several years among the primitive Polynesian tribes, and to have seen something of the American Indians. I find the same mental phenomena in respect to faith and its influence on art in the extremes of barbarisms as in the matured civilizations of Europe, which in their turn are paralleled in the experiences of the rudest and most cultured peoples of antiquity. History invariably discloses a period in the annals of every race when the conceptions of a Supreme Being were comparatively simple and spiritual. If I may so express it, the first mental instinct is to "feel after" the great central truth of a universal Creator, whose attributes cannot be fittingly personified under any form the mind is capable of conceiving. But as time rolls on, and men's desires take more material shapes, this great Mystery becomes intolerable. God remains too far off, too little disposed or capable of protecting them. "I Am" is too abstract an idea for the mind's childhood. It does only for its unquestioning infancy or its complete maturity. In the interval or its transition state from instinctive faith to confirmatory reason, there arises a desire to reduce Divinity to its own loose standard of thought and feeling. Consequently the original conception is speedily lost sight of in the mazes of an unrestrained imagination. Instead of One God in all things, a god or devil is found in everything. By this familiarizing process each deity assumes a characteristic shape as the representative of some natural object, passion, or virtue, and is made chiefly in the image of many-sided man himself. This intense hunger for a tangible symbol or absolute personality of his God springs from weakness of understanding and perversity of heart combined. We all have it

*Extremes meet in civilization and barbarism.*

at some age or other. None have the right to condemn Thomas for insisting on the evidence of touch. Our God must be felt, to be proved. If humanity makes mistakes in its search, we need not treat it as a deadly sin. On the contrary, it is a good symptom in the soul that it tries to find out its Author. Still, the lower the intelligence the more it clamors for the image in preference to the spirit. Or if forbidden to manufacture idols, it pictures to itself gods and devils, with congenial abodes, on a material basis.

The sages of Greece denounced Homer and Hesiod for having materialized and debased the earlier conceptions of divinity. Xenophanes, as Max Muller[1] tells us, quoting the philosopher, was shocked to perceive that "men seem to have created their gods, and to have given them their own minds, voice, and figure." Heraclitus, considering the Homerian theology to be flippant infidelity, argued that Homer's poems should be prohibited. One Greek writer even asserts that Pythagoras "saw the soul of Homer in the lower world hanging on a tree, and surrounded by serpents, as a punishment for what he had said of the gods," that is, for making them so like men.

Swedenborg, I believe, finds St. Paul in hell for similar heresy. The chief folly of the classical mythology was in its large admixture of immorality and sensualism; that of the Christian is in its irrationality and asceticism. Religious retrogression was the rule of both periods, the Greeks forgetting their original monotheistic conception of Zeus, and the Christians theirs of Jehovah as transmitted by the Jews; each people relapsing into religious systems repugnant in form and idea to the primitive germs of faith.

Christianity held true to its earlier belief so long as it was in an inferior political position; but no sooner did it rise to power on the ruin of paganism, than it followed in the same theological track which had brought its predecessor to disgrace. As has been shown, the ruling motives of an idolatrous art spring from the same sources among all peoples. But the quality of motives may differ greatly in the same creed, as we perceive in the extreme of Christian diabolism on the one side, and its ecstatic love on the other. The standard by which Christian art is to be tried, is more elevated in idea and more pure in morals than the heathen. It proposes a more spiritual basis of character, more definite doctrines, a broader, deeper humanity, and a loft-

[1] *The Science of Language*, 2d series, London, 1864, pp. 386–87

ier conception of divine attributes and functions. Therefore the palm of superiority must be awarded to its originating thought over that of all others.

This truth is clearly shown in the difference between the pagan and Christian conception of the goddess women, Venus and the Virgin Mother, as the supreme idealization of each in their efforts to exalt the sex, both exercising a profound influence over their respective religions; the one the embodiment of physical loveliness, the other of spiritual graces. The tend ency of the former was to keep woman the prey of man's passions, or at the best to esteem her as the sensual reward of his heroisms and the incarnation of his dreams of beauty. Although the latter in its blind devotion, also exalted her person to the level of Divinity, the belief was of great service to civilization by lifting woman out of sensualism, and making her coequal with man, morally and intellectually.

Can as much excellence be claimed for the executive skill of Christian art as for that of paganism? This is a question each student will decide for himself. I have already pointed out some of the essential merits of the different styles under review. We might indefinitely prolong the comparison. Among the minor forms, Genii can be contrasted with Angels; Fames and Victories with Cherubim and Seraphim; Furies, Fates, and Gorgons with Deaths, Devils, and Demons; Muses, Nymphs, Fauns, and Graces with the St. Cecilias, St. Margarets, St. Catherines, or like impersonations of Christian virtues and accomplishments. After the same manner we may also test the ideal prophets, apostles, and saints by the side of the heroes and demigods, and gradually ascend in hierarchal rank until the loftiest creations of either faith are put in juxtaposition. The "St. George" of Donatello may challenge comparison with the "Apollo de Belvidere" or the Ludovisian "Mars"; the Madonnas or Christ of Michael Angelo with a Minerva or Juno of the school of Phidias; Venus de Milo or the Dying Gladiator; a Hercules with a St. Christopher; Castor and Pollux with Saints Damian and Cosmas; the "Modesty" of the Vatican with a Santa Susana; an Antinoüs with a St. Sebastian; in fine, the entire circle of figure sculpture of pagan with later times. I wish we could extend the contest to painting, that we might put similarly on trial those mighty creations of Michael Angelo's brush, the Prophets and Sibyls of the Sistine, the luminous, etherealized inventions of Correggio, and the no less distinguished works of

Raphael and Titian, with the noblest productions of the Grecian painters. They worked on a lower level of art-motive; but as in sculpture, they doubtless reached a higher point of executive skill than their rivals yet have. The Christian artist still has his greatest triumph to win in raising his work to the height of his spiritual standard.

*The Messiah and the Almighty as types in Art.*

His highest effort is to represent the person of the Messiah, to personify the Almighty, and to depict Heaven. Michael Angelo's well known "Christ sustaining his Cross" is decidedly pagan in style, with no sentiment indicative of the subject. It is simply a well executed statue of a muscular model. The colossal "Christ" of Tenerani at St. Peter's is even less successful. Unlike the preceding, it is draped. He is represented in the act of blessing with uplifted hands, after the manner of the popes, for one of whose ponderous figures, as seen on their monuments, this Christ might pass. How the sculptor of the "Descent from the Cross" in the Torlonia Chapel of the Lateran and the "Angel" of the Minerva, should be so faulty in his conception of the second person of the Trinity, is surprising. As it is less difficult to treat this motive from its purely human aspect, we have both in sculpture and painting masterly examples, chiefly of anatomical expression and beautiful sentiment, of the Man of Sorrows, or nailed to the cross. But Christ has yet to be adequately represented in his office of Divine Judge, or as welcoming the redeemed into his Father's kingdom. Orgagna and his school represent him as a consuming wrath, hurling sinners to the destruction prepared for them from the beginning. A few, following after Fra Angelico, and Sano di Pietro in their enchanting compositions of the "Coronation of the Virgin," seek to exhibit the Saviour in his aspect of triumphant love; but even with them, although the countenance of Christ is radiant with the joy of his gracious act, yet the real majesty of heaven is above their reach. If, then, it is so difficult to realize the divine in man, it seems a hopeless, if not a sacrilegious task, to attempt the Almighty. Sculpture wisely abstains, except in relief or in a minor way, as in the Lucca della Robbia ware. The coarse figures of the early mosaicists, worthy of their barbarous period, are as childish in conception as they are rude in execution. Looking down from empyrean vaults, glowing with gems and radiant with gold, their lofty vastness gives to them a distinctive majesty, leavened with awe. When we reflect how common this motive is in painting, it

really seems that some other reason than a disinclination to attempt it on account of religious scruples, must have influenced the sculptors of every epoch, especially as there were mediums within their control, such as pure marble, the fittest thing for spiritual expression, and granites, jaspers, porphyries, and other adamantine rocks, particularly adapted, as the art of Egypt shows, to suggest supernal power. Why is it that the religious mind looks with complacency on pictures of God, and yet shudders at the thought of statues of Him? Is it an instinctive homage of the soul to a superior capacity in sculpture to incarnate the spiritual essence of an abstract idea whose very name must not be lightly spoken?

Whatever may be the cause, certain it is that pictures of the Almighty, almost always in a realistic sense as an *old* man, rarely as a symbol, are common. They are never, however, made objects of worship, but are in general illustrative of sacred history, or accessories in dogmatic or devotional compositions. Here again is another anomaly of the human character. Pictures of the only Being that revelation commands man to worship are precisely those that under no circumstances do they worship, even in a representative sense; while those of men, like ourselves, whom we are expressly forbidden to adore, freely receive the adoration of the multitude of Roman Catholics.[1]

Æsthetically viewed, the Grecian Zeus or Roman Jupiter is a superior conception of the ordinary pictorial representation of the Supreme God of the Christians. Jupiter is the climax of man; the human being perfected and incapable of change; always in the maturity of immortal power, wisdom, and beauty; serene and passionless, yet containing all passion; in short, the *ideal* man. Misled, perhaps, too much by the literal rendering of "Our Father," in the light of the "Ancient of Days," in itself the most sublime of conceptions of divinity, the artists of Christianity, from the Byzantines down to our times, portray God with the material tokens of age; old in the sense of time and paternity; sometimes benevolent and sometimes angry; majestic and venerable always, but more with the appearance of a created being than of a Being that creates all things himself.

Can art suggest this? Raphael's "Almighty," in his Bible

[1] Paintings of the Almighty were not common before the fourteenth century. To the populace they symbolized rank and greatness, and God was associated in their minds, and indeed often represented as a Pope, Emperor, or King, but the artistic notion was that of an aged and powerful human being.

Stories of the Vatican, ordering creation to appear, is ridiculous in action and conception. Blake succeeds better in his rendering of the creative power under the usual form of age. His conception is majestic and dignified. But Michael Angelo in his Sistine "Creation of Adam" reaches the actual sublime in force of design as well as sentiment, in his figure of the Creator. He makes a being over whom time has no power; ever strong, ever mature, ever self-existent, as he sweeps through the universe by the action of his will; merely touching the dust of the earth with the tip of his finger and lo, Adam!

It is unfortunate that the paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine can be seen only by lying flat on the back, as Michael Angelo did with the paint dripping on his face when he painted them; a position not always attainable or favorable to study when attained.[1] Unless the Sistine frescoes be thoroughly examined, no adequate conception of the genius of their author can be formed. The power that conceived and placed them there stands in the annals of art solitary and alone. Its force of design, sublimity of originating idea, and interpenetration into the prophetic mysteries of man's religious being, is as if it had been let into the secrets of the Almighty by a sympathetic vision which compasses the will of the Creator, realizing to human eyes without sacrilegious shock the visible presence of Him who made man in his own likeness, and is equally conscious of the attributes and destinies of the beings He has created. Phidias doubtless surpassed Michael Angelo in anatomical idealism and repose, but not in majesty of movement and depth of meaning. A profound consciousness of the required spectacle and character passes as by magic into Michael Angelo's brush. His work debars all ordinary admiration or dislike. Either it rises so far above the comprehension of the spectator as to be repulsive and unintelligible, or else it lifts him into its own transcendent worlds, disclosing a new sense of the capacity of art to give and of his own soul to receive.

This intense power comes of the scope Michael Angelo took in realizing his conceptions untrammelled by the æsthetic limitations of Greek art. Like Nature herself, he has not only the

[1] Here I would observe that they conclusively demonstrate that his capacity of color, in which he is popularly held to be deficient, was not inferior to his design. Their large harmony, richness, and breadth of tone, quite justify his impatience at and disregard of easel work.

beautiful but something of higher import to reveal. He must put the souls of things into shapes that most truthfully and completely express their vital presence. His human ideal rises higher than sensuous perfection; just as his composition was based on laws that refused to be subservient to mere rules of geometrical distribution, mathematical regularity of lines, and conventional unity of design. With him each being is an individual unit, having a part to execute characteristic of his cause of existence. Each is complete alone; an absolute idea and identity, worthily united when needful to others equally self-conscious and independent in a common motive. The sibyls and prophets impress by their supernal functions, while Adam and Eve are the embodiment of manly and womanly beauty; which though consummate is made secondary to their characters in the momentous episodes of their lives. Razzi's "Eve" in the fresco of the "Descent of Christ into Limbo," in the Academy of Siena, is a singularly pure and graceful nude woman, with a delicate beauty, heightened by a sad memory of the misery her error caused the world. But Michael Angelo's "Eve" is the hale, handsome mother of mankind in the bright morn of her existence, feeling the strong, inrushing tide of life, direct from God's own breath, swelling her veins.

Michael Angelo never shrank from any common truth requisite to the end in view. Hence he does not conceal clumsy strength of youthful figure, marks of age, or soften violence of action, if they enter at all into his motives. He, however, could make appear natural and decorous what an inferior hand would render absurd or exaggerated. Who but he could place a colossal woman nearly naked astride of a revolving wheel, as is his Fortune, with such combined dignity, elegance of figure, and beauty of symbolism; its realistic impossibility disguised in sheer art skill!

The Greek artist strove in his ideal for a generic type of beauty which, being perfect, must be immortal. This gave a conventional sameness to his figures. The great Italians, particularly Michael Angelo, reserved their power more for idealism of character than of form. One of his sonnets finely expresses the spiritual secret of his superiority as man and artist: —

> "As when, O lady mine, with chiselled touch,
> The stone unhewn and cold
> Becomes a living mould,

The more the marble wastes, the more the statue grows ;
So if the working in my soul be such
That good is but evolved by Time's dread blows,
  The vile shell, day by day,
  Falls like superfluous flesh away.
O take whatever bonds my spirit knows
  And reason, virtue, power, within me lay."

## CHAPTER V.

### ARCHITECTURE.

MAN has no precise patterns for his architecture, as he has for painting and sculpture. The cave is his sole model of a house or temple, and served as both for an indefinite period. We can, therefore, estimate the progress he has made in this direction by the distance between his primeval rock-lair and the Parthenon, Alhambra, or Westminster Abbey. Great as this is, these edifices are not the finalities of his creative energies, but only hints of his power in reserve.

The culmination of plastic art is architecture. Painting and sculpture by themselves address us more familiarly as individuals: architecture, which includes both, in a corporate sense as a ruling mind, representing ideas or organic form in the whole. As with the minor forms of art, rightly to interpret it, we must put ourselves in sympathy with its life. If we do not receive truth in the sense in which it is given, it becomes a source of error. In art the vital thought is its life-blood. Mistakes arise from the different acceptation of things by diverse temperaments and intelligence. To some persons a lamb has no other association than mint sauce; with others it is the incarnation of innocence; while a select few see in it a correspondence with abstruse dogma. So a pigeon to one mind symbolizes the spirit of God; to another it suggests a pie. If a priest administer bread and wine in a church, they are received with reverential awe as the body of the Son of God; but partaken elsewhere they are simple viands. The essential difference of things, therefore, lies in ourselves. Every distinction is true in itself, but all distinctions cannot be true at the same moment to ourselves. As the animal or intellectual life predominates we receive in kind; so that the same object may be a stone of offence to one, science to another, beauty to a third, and religion to the spiritual-minded.

Architecture is comprehensive in the same sense as Nature. Indeed it is the material expression of the character of man, as nature is of the mind of its Author. It first impresses us as

a great whole, after the manner of the landscape. The naked building is its anatomy or geological structure determined by science. Art clothes it, as vegetation adorns the earth with sensuous beauty and spiritual significance. Like the structure of the globe itself, architecture exhibits infinite variety of organic form and color, but refers all to a common cause. By its means man has ample scope for the development of his creative faculties, at will transmuting rude matter into beautiful shape. Hence the functions of the true architect are among the highest that can be bestowed on a human being. His responsibilities are as much greater than those of the common artist as his field is more extended, his work more durable, and its uses and influence more widely diffused. The greatness of the "old masters," is greatest in architecture. Witness Giotto, Orgagna, Raphael, and Michael Angelo. With such men, painting and sculpture partake of the largeness of spirit of their more comprehensive function. Noble architecture affects the soul after the manner of grand nature. Like the varied moods of the ocean, mountain, or plain it thrills the spectator with its own emotional life; and we become conscious of an illimitable power in the individual that inspires us with a more hopeful estimate of humanity at large.

*Architecture comprehensive like Nature. Functions of the Architect.*

Nature bears toward God another similitude with architecture to man. Both are the material evolvement of a common principle of constructive will. Man's handicraft grows out of God's creation through analogy; first, for use, secondly, to express himself. Nature is constantly changing its aspect towards man, from the twofold operation of its own self-adjusting laws, and man's influence upon it. As we see it, therefore, it is always in a transition state, not a final, perfect one, any more than our present architecture is the climax of man's capacities. Both are constantly undergoing changes, imposed on them by their respective governing forces, to adjust them to the exigencies of the epoch. Nature obeys the divine will implicitly, without choice of its own. Inferior to man in organic spirit, it acts by prescribed laws. In this respect nature is entirely independent of man. With or without his coöperation vegetation grows; the seasons keep their allotted time; the chemistry of matter goes on; animal life responds to its instincts; the universe revolves in its appointed orbits, and not a ray of light misses its destined goal. In fine all that man sees, that is beyond his power to create, is both the subject and object of an unconscious science,

so profound in its operations, that during his long sojourn upon earth, he has detected only the most simple of its laws. He cannot essentially change that which God directly cares for. His limits would seem to be those of discovery, modification, and application, in all that relates to the organization of matter itself.

Perhaps the most precious discovery man has yet made, is that he is the heir of nature, promoted to free-will. The kingdom of matter is given to him for the expansion of his faculties, and to receive the stamp of his ideas. After endowing him with mind, and the inestimable boon of liberty of choice between good and evil, that he might freely seek out his own happiness, how could God deny him the mastership of the material world, without nullifying his own purpose? Therefore it is permitted to him to control matter to his temporary purposes, under restrictions of organic law, equally applicable to his own physical organization. At his bidding, light and heat burst from the cold rock, music issues from the dumb ore, luminous color from the dark earth, and each crude or shapeless thing moulds itself into an object of use or beauty.

*Why architecture exists.*

In virtue of this function architecture exists. For material needs, the plainest building would answer. But man is not content with simple or rude shelter. His restless mind must express its spiritual longings. The readiest way is in song; the most imposing by architecture, which as it richly develops, forms a literature in stone. Several nations once prominent have left no other traces of themselves.

Overgrown by the dense forests of Central America, we find the architectural débris of peoples that had made a considerable advance towards civilization, without intercourse with other races, so far as is known. Judging from the uncouth idols that have been brought to light, their religion must have remained in the low stage of fetichism: or that condition in which men seek to avoid calamities by propitiating evil spirits, having greater faith in their power of harm than in the ability of a benevolent deity to protect them. Their buildings are largely ornamented with angular designs, one of which resembles the well-known Greek fret, which is also found in China, and seems to be universal. But in general they do not rise above abortive attempts at beauty, in diversifying broad surfaces, with no apparent intellectual motive, and but crude carving or modelling.

*Civilization no fixed standard.*

Civilization has no fixed standard or definable limits Our own is apt to be taken as the best, and

others judged in its light. But the approved institution of yesterday, is the confessed barbarism of to-day, as we see in the fate of slavery in America; and we shall see in that of other ideas and customs which are now respectable. Human sacrifices were believed to be the chief religious duty scarcely three centuries ago in Mexico, whose civilization, as well as that of Peru, was so lauded by the followers of Cortez and Pizarro. These were unlettered men, disposed to exaggerate their exploits; so allowance must be made for their statements. Certainly the architectural indications now remaining are very little, if any, superior to those of their neighbors in Yucatan, Guatemala, or further south. Even the advanced races of America were but superior savages, with no intellectual cohesion, advanced notions of religion, or any gifts for the common treasury of civilization. The most interesting fact concerning them, is the pitiful ending of their high-sounding empires, which vanished like a dream before the assaults of a few hundred Europeans. The superiority of race, or rather of the power which a higher civilization has over a lower, was never more conspicuously shown. Nothing is left of the art of the subdued Indians, except a few specimens of a pictorial language of childish simplicity of invention, grotesque drawing, but brilliant coloring and complex arrangement; buildings of rude strength, with no merit of design; a few roads; a clumsy pottery of a course texture, crudely archaic silver or gold images, and carvings or sculpture whose ideal is intense ugliness and distortion when based on the human form, and rude simplicity on any other natural object. Yet I have seen things done by the descendants of these aborigines, which indicate artistic capacity. That light had penetrated the minds of their ancestors is evident from some of their moral maxims and political axioms. In their ornamentation there may be detected a latent feeling for beauty. Parts of their work are not much worse than early Lombard carving. Still I cannot conceive that art has lost more by the disappearance of their architecture, than has true religion by the destruction of their rites of worship. Cargoes of their sacred vessels were sent to Europe to be melted into coin. This was done when the aristocratic patronage of art was at its height. It especially delighted in jeweller's work, which the skill of Cellini had made so precious. Yet of the multitude of costly articles of which the plunderers of Mexico and Peru stripped their victims, nothing now remains. All went to the crucible. Would this have been done if they had had

artistic value? The contemporary art of Europe of a similar character, is preserved as national heir-looms.

*Albert Durer's testimony.*

But we have an eye-witness, than whom no one was better qualified to judge, whose testimony contradicts my conclusion and the evidence of what I have myself seen in the museums of Lima and Mexico. Albert Durer, in the winter of A. D. 1520-21, visited the Low Countries, and his journal has recently been published at Brussels. He writes, "I have seen among the curiosities which have been brought to the king (Charles V.), from the golden country (Mexico), a sun of pure gold a fathom in diameter, and a silver moon of the same size. I admired two chambers full of all kinds of curiosities coming from the same place: there were arms, harnesses, engines of war, curious dresses, litters, and many other things, after the fashion of that country. It is to be remarked that all these objects *are infinitely more beautiful* and rich than what we have. They are also so precious that they are esteemed worth one hundred thousand florins. I avow that nothing has ever excited my curiosity so much as the extraordinary productions, which prove how much the inhabitants of these distant countries possess an inventive and ingenious mind."

The architecture of China, Japan, and those races whose ancestors were nomads, in general lightness of form and material, is but one remove from the tent. Its lines, even in its most ambitious attempt, the pagoda, follow those of the canvas-homes of the desert, ever narrowing with a downward sweep, as if reluctant to leave the ground. Ornamentation is usually of a grotesque, unnatural design, in which dragons figure conspicuously, and seems intended to excite awe or fright in the spectator, instead of any pleasurable emotions. Several thousands of years of comparative civilization in the further Orient have failed to generate any style to which the outside world attaches importance, or even to vary the common type, the novelty of whose fantastic aspect alone commends it to European eyes.

Hindoo architecture is a capricious interblending of massive strength, feminine delicacy of outlines, beautiful details of classical or Arab origin, and mazes of mystical sculpture that baffle description. It partakes of all other styles, and is like to none. Elaborately grand and imposing, it both fascinates and disappoints by its curious jumble of beauty and repulsiveness in ornamentation, just as the creative fancy was free to adopt its own inventions or was compelled to follow in the prescribed track of religious

ideas. It marks the line where the two great currents of Oriental and Occidental thought either come into collision or diverge as from a common fountain on their separate missions: the one ever tending to a materialism that runs into fetichism and the other to an intellectualism that aspires to a spiritual cognizance of things, — the diabolism of China opposed to the idealism of Greece, or the deadening fatalism of Mohammedanism to the hope of Christianity.

These conflicting elements prevent a homogeneous type of architecture, founded on one manner of life and belief, such as that of ancient Egypt. Here its character is more intensely metaphysical, and its symbolism less grotesquely varied and fanciful, less abnormal in imagination, but more grand, simple, and profound, without being complex and horrible like the primitive Hindoo. Both veiled truth in enigma as too sacred for the profane mind. Both delighted in caves, underground structures, or gloomily lighted edifices and vast sepulchral monuments, as if the chief business of man was death, or he was most to be honored for dying. The principal ambition of the powerful would appear to have been to eternize their names in matter. Their most durable monuments were built for their embalmed corpses, as though all went well with the soul while the body could be kept from decomposition. Temples and tombs are much alike in mysterious awe. No doubt much of their massive gloom and deep shadow came from a natural desire to escape the burning heat of the climate, which could scarcely penetrate their thick sides and scanty openings. To enliven them it became necessary to use bright colors and positive designs for ceilings and walls. Even the immense columns which supported the roofs and doorways were painted, history and mythology affording the chief subject-matter. Sculpture and painting were in use only as accessories to the architecture and rigidly subordinated to it. When we consider the gigantic scale of the combined whole, its unity of purpose and execution, its striking appeal to the mystical and mysterious, the deep significance it attached to death, and its own suggestiveness of immutable, magnificent power, removed so far beyond the ordinary standard of men, is it matter of wonder that it overawed and confused the common mind, and helped keep the Egyptian fellah the helpless slave of his rulers?

The shadow of that deathward architecture still broods along the Nile. As thought goes back to the first stages of man's his

tory, all ages seem to roll into one and the past and present become identical. No idea has issued from the human brain, no deed has sprung from the human hand, but still exists in vital force. Somewhere in this vast universe there must be congenial space and life for every form of existence which had its origin on our globe; communities and persons at will repeating or varying themselves, and endowed with individuality as immortal as mind itself. The songs and sighs that are entombed in the monuments of the past are living contemporaneous voices appealing for sympathy or help. As we truly decide on right or wrong we gladden the universal heart and speed it on its way rejoicing. But if we judge contrary to love and justice the welfare of all souls, past and present, is impeded. This magnetic chain of sympathy which links together all sentient beings is a solemn claim on our moral sense, for it shows us that the responsibility which attaches to every word or action is limited neither by time nor space. Good and evil once set in motion labor forever in their respective spheres. Brahma, Confucius, Moses, Mohammed, or Jesus, pass out of mortal sight, but their words remain flesh while the world lasts, deciding here and hereafter the lot of countless multitudes. Monuments that only record how man darkened the understanding of his brother, shutting him out from the light of human love and spiritual hope, wasting the temple of his body in base toils born of pride, avarice, or superstition, oppress my spirit strangely. Ascending the pyramid I do not tread on dumb stones but on souls of still fruitlessly toiling fellow-beings, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Each step awakens the groan of some poor wretch whose sad life was shaped out for him by no choice of his own. He cries, "Come and help us, for we still suffer." And believe me, as we cultivate in ourselves nobler uses of life so shall the condition of entire humanity be raised. Architecture has more to answer for morally than all other art. The minor arts being in the main the results of individual taste and election, their good or evil is comparatively restricted. But the free will of the people in no age has had much to do with the prevailing types or deciding the special purposes of public edifices. There will be no complete, final architecture, until the popular mind is sufficiently instructed and its feeling sufficiently spiritualized to evolve its forms in a spontaneous manner out of its enlarged circle of needs and aspirations. The freer the thought, and the more intense the enthusiasm or discontent of a race in striving for

its ideal, the nearer it comes to realizing the essential truth of the above assertion. Grecian and Gothic architecture, and in some respects the Arab, are genuine approaches to wholesome types. All others have been imposed by the few on the many, paid for by forced taxation, direct robbery, or stolen labor; had in them no blessing for the workers; a curse, rather; or when not the direct curse of despotisms like those of Egypt and India, the more insidious one of sensualisms and bigotries like those of Louis XIV. of France, Philip II. of Spain, and petty tyrants of the Renaissant stamp in Italy. There is therefore something else to be seen in the architecture of the past besides its æsthetic aspects. Something more than ponderous masses, magic light and shadow, gorgeous ornamentation and picturesque ruin. These are but material effects talking the language of romance and illusions. Look awhile on realities. The spirit of humanity tells of its long imprisonment and torture in these enchanted temples and palaces; of the wrongs heaped on it generation after generation, written on the stony record it was forced to rear. It reveals the secret of the Sphinx; how that common humanity was reduced to the level of the unreflecting brute; until all that was left of it really human was its face, and that not permitted to disclose the evil that consumed its life. Further, it denounces Egyptian art for embalming the bodies of the dead at the expense of the souls of the living, which were changed into stones and heaped up mountain-high over them as if to crush out all hope of a resurrection to a happier existence. In viewing it or kindred work we are forced either to believe that men then were incapable of rising above the condition of slaves or that they were kept by force in helpless ignorance.

The chief characteristic of Assyrian architecture, as we get at its spirit from modern restoration of its designs, was man-worship, with its concomitant principle of arbitrary power. In general feeling it was not unlike the modern Palatial or second stage of the Renaissant Classical, being lordly, sensual, and vain-glorious, given over to pomp and luxury. But its ornamentation was more grand, while as a whole there was a greater harmony of details, besides an originality of design and creative force, dashed with Oriental mysticism quite beyond that. Egyptian architecture being founded on religious feeling, still survives, appealing to the Invisible. But of that of Nineveh, devoted to the pride of man, in his own riches and power, nothing remains except heaps of sand and ashes in which

were buried the few fragments of grandiose sculpture and smaller objects that have lately found their way into the museums of Europe.

*Effect of race and climate on art.*

I once supposed that race, by itself, had a decisive influence on art. But a more extended view leads me to reject it as of special importance. There exists at present a certain artistic inequilibrium of development in different nations, most prominent in architecture, but perceptible in every department, which at first sight might seem to indicate some fundamental cause in peoples themselves. It is however an effect of training, chiefly religious, and the policy or tastes of the ruling and wealthy classes, modified by the exigencies of climate. Recently, the genius of the Jewish race for music has been conspicuously manifested. Yet the old Shemitic tribes left no monuments to prove a capacity for art. Their artistic feeling found vent in sensuous or sublime poetry, inspired by their monotheistic ideas. If we accept their abstract imagery and spiritual imaginings, for instance those of the book of Job, in the sense of high art, as undoubtedly it is, the Arab stands at the very head of races. It was left to those foreign in blood and hostile in religion to put their conceptions into plastic or pictorial form. Monotheism held a firm, restrictive hand on the materialistic development of art. By prohibiting the graven likeness of images of the Supreme, it took away from art, as the public taste was then, its only powerful incentive. There was nothing left except decoration. Architecture especially, was largely dependent on sculpture, as ornamentation, but principally for its grandest motive, as the home of the gods. While polytheistic nations erected innumerable and splendid temples, the monotheistic Jews built only one, and that rudely simple, if we exclude the futile structure of the seceding tribes; and their nomadic relatives aspired to nothing more permanent than a tent-tabernacle.

After the Jews lost their nationality, there was no opportunity for them to develop an original style of architecture. Although so tenacious of their religion, they readily accept the civilizations of their adopted countries in other respects, excelling in finance, literature, and art, which proves that training, not blood or climate, decides the question as regards them.

The Turks are hostile to art, solely from religious scruples hardened into fanatical prejudices, and from the virtual prohibition of any education that favors it. Yet the Saracenic Arabs

and Spanish Moors, in race akin to the Jews, and holding to the faith of the Turks, so far overcame the sensual stupor of their creed as to create a style of architecture which, for refined beauty, delicate ornamentation, sensuous grace, and ethereality of forms and hues is as lovely as it is unique. Religion prescribed the limits of its decoration, forbidding the introduction of the human figure or any realistic reproduction of natural forms; but this restriction operated as a stimulus to the inventive faculties, so that the world is indebted to them for its purest and most exquisite varieties of architectural decoration based on strictly mathematical rules, and scientific harmonies and contrasts of color. Its general masses and constructive forms were decided by the conditions of climate, not plagiarized as is the modern habit from other styles or peoples regardless of their adaptability to new uses and localities.

As a general rule, the religious idea, apart from dogma, both controls and expresses itself in the highest forms of architecture, originating and developing whatever there is in it most beautiful and spiritual. But this progress is slow and fluctuating.

*Primitive architecture, principles of. Cyclopean and Pelasgian edifices.*

Its earliest development partakes of man's primitive ideas of God, as a being of boundless power and might. The ruling forms are ponderous, outlasting all subsequent ones in which the elements of æsthetic beauty or spiritual significance are introduced. Then mankind relied on physical strength to protect themselves and to perpetuate their memory, just as they looked in fear upward to an omnipotent strength. The times too were uncertain and sanguinary. Self-defence in the shape of impregnable temple-citadels was as much a domestic necessity as ironclads are now for national independence. But those gigantic rock-structures known as the Cyclopean and Pelasgian styles of architecture, of which there are fine examples at Arpino and Alatri in Central Italy, indicate something else besides protection from enemies armed with spears and arrows. They are partly ambitious attempts to define everlasting strength by matter, and partly the results of a senseless desire of exaggeration common to enterprising races.

In massive strength, the early Doric architecture corresponds to the Egyptian type. It is however emancipated from sepulchral life into outdoor liberty, delighting in space, rejoicing in light; and, as at Pæstum, severely grand and noble, with a

natural richness of color, inherent in its material, heightened by the caressing warmth of the atmosphere, a background of purple mountain, and a foreground of blue rippling sea, into which the sun pours its opalescent splendor.

Much of this halo depends upon the isolation of the object. The chief attraction of Grecian architecture lies on the outside. The Greeks were averse to religious rites within dark and confined walls. Masters of æsthetics, they knew how to make an effective tableau out of their worship, as well as to place their temples in the best positions to exhibit their serenity, in harmonious contrast with the variety and breadth of the landscape. Then too, a classical temple, though originating in a tomb, was the embryo palace.[1] The Grecian temple was divested of mystical and metaphysical functions, simplified, humanized, made intelligible and beautiful throughout, and kept as a hospitable sanctuary for the gods when they left Olympus to visit their descendants on the earth. Man and deity both loved the open air. Forests, plains, and mountains were peopled with dignities of every grade. Zeus no more lived in a house made by man than Jehovah. Unlike the latter, he had his rites performed under the clear skies. Games, plays, and schools held to the like habit. Thus it happened to the Greek by a spontaneous association of ideas to have a pantheistic sympathy with the external world and to manifest it by outdoor statues and architecture, subordinating both to nature at large, and at the same time making them its crown of beauty.

Order is the key-note of Grecian architecture. It is strictly an intellectual aspiration, founded on mathematical law. Proportion, symmetry, elegance, finish, purity of material, simplicity of line, regularity of features, a passionless dignity of outlook as of fulfilled desire; such are its vital characteristics. Within it is cold, formal, and unsatisfying; without, beautiful, majestic; if seen in crowded masses, flat and monotonous. Its spiritual failure is in its completeness. There is left no suggestion of an unrealized idea to the soul. It is a demonstrated, intellectual

[1] In the infancy of the pagan civilizations, men were content to live in huts or inconvmodious and rude houses, in order to lodge their gods magnificently. The mediævalists also, built their cathedrals on this principle of self-sacrifice or propitiation. As rulers succeeded to the offices of the gods, whether of Israel, Babylon, Assyria, Rome, or Renaissant Europe, the palace began to take precedence in luxury and splendor of temple and church. Protestantism thus far has had a like effect in raising the standard of domestic at the expense of sacred edifices.

problem; pleasant to understand, but pointing to nothing higher than its own fulfilment. Planting itself firmly and squarely on the earth, it takes the imagination heavenward by columns so many given feet, and by a defined number of geometrical steps in systematic beauty, and then suddenly checks its flight by heavy entablature and cornice, cutting short the scientific upright, by the equally scientifically disposed horizontal lines, as having accomplished the purpose of its being. Its organic variety is equally limited by rules from which it can never depart except at the expense of its special excellence. The gradations or alterations in details, by which it passed from the severe Doric to the elegant Corinthian, and their intermediate stages, are few and simple, marking the progress of classical taste in its exchange of the sublime for the beautiful.

*Rome — The dome.*

Rome organized a style which admirably illustrated its imperial power. Retaining the beautiful forms and character of details of the Grecian architecture, for the substructure, the Romans crowned it with a miniature firmament, whose bold curve, like the vault of heaven, haughtily symbolized universal dominion. To them we owe the final development of the arch, whether gracefully spanning columns, tier upon tier in varied orders, ambitiously piled skyward, as in the Colosseum, or expanded into one noble dome like the Pantheon, which incited the greater marvels of Michael Angelo and Brunelleschi. The arch is the fundamental feature of Roman architecture, being to it what the spire is to the Gothic. Etruria gave it to Rome in the first instance as a simple principle of strength combined with convenience in building, but the Romans made it majestic. Possibly its final shape was suggested by the Italian pine, whose tops are of every degree of roundness, from the somewhat flattened swell which is copied in the Baths of Agrippa to the conical rise of Santa Maria del Fiore, at Florence. Externally the new architecture retained its elements of Grecian beauty, crowned and varied by the distinctive arch or dome, which relieved their abstract, intellectual idealism by an infusion of realistic thought, more flexible and practical in its application to the ideas and uses of men themselves, apart from polytheistic associations, yet equally capable of being consecrated to sacred purposes. The sentiment of the universal pervades it. In the earliest basilicas we see how readily and with what slight change its constructive qualities meet the requirements of the Christian religion, after having done service in pagan temples,

baths, halls of justice, and the forum. This is due to its inherent nobility of form and simplicity of ornamentation, which require but suitable characterization to fit the edifice as a whole for any great purpose. I do not mean to say that it best expresses the spirituality of the Christian faith; far from it. But it can be appropriately used for that worship, while the pure Grecian temple has no similar elasticity of constructive functions. Neither is this better adapted for the secular wants of modern life, for everything is subordinated to external effect and use. A great step was gained when not merely variety of horizontal line was secured and indefinite expansion of the building, itself free from monotony of masses, but the interior was rendered light and cheerful, and capable of attractive decoration. In doing this, the Romans were faithful to their Etruscan training in masonry. They built firmly and stoutly. So strong is their brick work, once incrusted with frailer and more tempting materials for the spoiler, that it rivals the pyramids themselves in durability. Marble ceilings and adamantine vaults, of old time, glowing in color, and graceful in suggestive designs, both invited and confined the thought to the interiors of edifices, worldly in character, elegant in adornment, convenient and luxurious, according to their purpose, majestic in appearance, concentrating in themselves the ambition and glory of the nation, without any of that individuality of constructive expression and artistic thought, not to mention the spiritual element, which distinguishes Gothic architecture. This shows throughout a spontaneous faith and enthusiasm driven into pursuit of the unknown by the force of an exalted imagination, like the clouds of heaven before a gale, changing hue and shape at every step of their progress. But the Roman style, although emancipated from the mathematical formalism and narrowness of application of the Grecian, had a stately, imperious order of its own; a given goal and code; planting itself and taking possession in the name of the Roman people with all the fixedness of will of the nation's legions in their steady tramp of conquest. It is a type of human law, the equalizing protective civic element of national life, which welds society into a unity. This feature explains the ease and freedom with which it naturalizes itself in every civilized country. Imperial Rome had no bigotry. If it had had, Christianity, like Protestantism in Spain, would have been stifled long before it could have gone alone. Reasons of state gave rise to spasmodic persecutions of any sect that seemed

hostile. But in general, if they paid taxes punctually, Jew, Egyptian, Greek, Scythian, Gaul, or Christian were unmolested, or even protected from one another when disposed to mutual fanaticism. Roman architecture represents this spirit of toleration of all peoples and creeds moulded into civic life under the control of imperial power.

*Germs of Architecture.*

Architecture in embryo contains two fundamental germs; one relating to its organic form, the other, to the vivifying idea. How the latter works, we have just seen in the instances of Grecian and Roman architecture, and its operation will be traced in other styles. An understanding of the dominant motive may be helped by keeping in mind the rudimentary lines of the generic architectures. I have already spoken of the concave lines of the Chinese and Japanese styles as a reminiscence of the nomadic lives of their ancestors. Wherever the Tartar race exists, the tent furnishes the structural type of its edifices. In Egypt, the inclined lines of the pyramid, obelisk, and temple-walls, seem to point to a similar period of national existence, varied by an experience of cave-life. But as these and other eastern styles have no substantial influence on our civilization, we can confine our view to those which do.

First, there is the Grecian, whose governing line is the *horizontal*, cutting off and keeping down the perpendicular, which it dominates. Its disposition is to cling to the earth; to walk by means of column legs, expanding indefinitely on the ground, and nowise ambitious of rising high above it.

Next comes the Roman, using the former for a footstool, and taking the *circle* or a segment of it for its geometrical ideal, with splendid results in a material and governing sense.

The third and last is the Gothic, which reverses the instinct of the first and selects the upright as its primary line, in virtue of a special law, which will disclose itself as its forms are passed in review.

These three are the generic styles of European civilization. All others come from their intermixture, varied sometimes, as in Venice, Sicily, and Spain, with features of Asiatic invention. Even these trace their origin to the simple, organic lines of the parent types, combined into mystical, dreamy, or voluptuous expression by the Oriental imagination. Compared with Roman and Tuscan domes, the light, curvilinear, graceful Byzantine and Saracenic ones seem like opalescent bubbles, on the verge of

bursting, and vanishing like a vision. They and their kindred accessories of etherealized arches, slender columns, and tapering minarets, are the sensuous poetry put into stone of races whose enjoyment is mainly passive and eye-fed.

One of the oldest varieties of the Roman, is the so-called Lombard style, though strictly speaking, the Lombards brought no art into Italy, but employed Italians to do their work. At bottom it is essentially Etruscan in feeling, excessively realistic and naturalistic in its ornamentation, making a copious use of animals in a symbolical sense, or out of wantonness of taste, and particularly prolific in fantastic and diabolic monsters. It was a rude compromise between long-established rules and forms, and the quaint and passionate imaginings of a fresh, barbarous race, semi-weaned from heathenism. The wild, novel, and childish appear together in crowded confusion, with orderly classical details, pure Christian symbolism, remains of imperial magnificence or Byzantine glitter, in one incongruous but striking whole, as if savages had enslaved various civilizations, jumbled them in indiscriminate ruin, and out of the heterogeneous mass were trying to fit a new garment of as many colors as Joseph's coat, unto themselves. They piled rows of columns of every dimension, kind, and material from all sorts of localities, or new ones of every conceivable pattern and fashion of capital, one over the other, as high as they could safely go; they combined the massive and strong with the light and delicate; they rudely carved everything in nature that took their fancies, grave, grotesque, or beautiful, and stuck them here, there, and everywhere; they invented extraordinary designs with no apparent motive beyond a feverish desire of work, and covering all available space with sculpture; they used all kinds of building stuff regardless of unity of tone, effect, and durability; in fact they anticipated, so far as inventive but unlettered action was concerned, the later Gothic freedom from conventional precedent and previous science, which being better instructed as well as evolved out of the sympathetic mental action of peoples akin in blood, led to superior results.

Romanesque architecture proper, is more directly derived from the Etruscan, modified and expanded by Roman influences, than the preceding, and is of a more orderly spirit and solidity of form. Indeed the Lombard variety is the result of a northern graft on it of a barbarous energy, license of action, and wild, instinctive thought, but half attuned to the spiritual

graces of Christianity. The Byzantine revelled in splendid coloring and imposing designs of mystical meaning, making its vaulted ceilings and domes blue and shining, like the starry heavens, and covering its walls with glowing mosaics and bright painting.

Its scale of ornamentation was more subtle and refined than the Lombard, tending to the solemn and mysterious where this showed a strong materialistic bias. Both favored bigotry and superstition. During their epoch, we find a strange mixture of good and evil, the crude and the beautiful, truth and falsehood, side by side; traditions and laws of good periods of art, and greater intellectual culture are seen in chaotic junction with new forms and ideas struggling for complete utterance, but held in leash by the Church, or kept under by the prevailing ignorance and disorder. Yet the human mind did assert its liberty more freely and in some sense, nobly, in architecture than in other ways. This was in part due to the fine remains of antiquity always in sight, and partly because architecture in itself offers a great scope of mental assertion without coming into direct collision with the despotism of the moment. Besides it is so fundamentally useful and universal in its functions, that one generation, creed, or policy is ever eager to avail itself of the edifices of another by a mere change of names and details, to fit them to new uses, without bringing in question the originating motive. Pagan basilicas and temples were readily transformed into Roman Catholic and Greek churches, which again were converted into Mohammedan mosques, or mosques into churches, as the tide of creeds happened to ebb and flow. So, too, Protestantism took possession of the ecclesiastical buildings of Romanism when Luther snatched from it half of its territory.

When Roman civilization finally broke up from want of any firm moral foundation, the legal and civic securities of social life disappeared with it. Weak and peace-loving people took refuge in convents, which were virtually sacred fortresses, while those who preferred the risks and prizes of secular life were compelled to defend themselves as they could. For the outside world there was no truce of God. The struggle of life was one of intense, narrow-minded selfishness. No man's love or charity could get beyond the interests of his family, business, class, or city. Every citizen was the rival of his neighbor; every trade of its companion industry; every town of the next, and so on, through all the distinctions of society. Civil and national unity was not

comprehended on the very soil which had given the most illustrious example of them. The only possible solution of political questions — if the causes of the never-ending internecine strifes deserve to be called such — was the brief ascendency of one faction over another, or of one petty tyrant over his rival, each and all alike unscrupulous as to their means of success. Outside of the Church, which alone kept populations from moral chaos, there was little centrifugal force in any direction, except as the instincts of gain or ambition caused temporary and ever-shifting coalitions for mutual protection, or to plunder the weaker. In Northern Europe the chief occupation of the labor-despising nobles was the highway robbery of the industrious classes. These, in Italy, in their turn, as fortune favored them, retaliated by depriving nobles of the common rights of citizens, and instituting a sort of outlawry against them. But in general the steel-shirted aristocracy had it all their own way, and it would have gone still harder with the workingmen and traders, if their oppressors had not found a congenial occupation in fighting each other.

*Feudal architecture. Towers.*

The effects of such a social state was seen at once on architecture. Every man's house, not as by English fiction of common-law, but as stone-and-mortar fact, became his castle. Hence it was that Europe of the dark ages came to be built over with a class of domestic edifices, as unlike to the luxurious cheerful villas and palaces of the Roman period as a rose is to a nettle. In the Teutonic north, they wore a romantic aspect on their high crags or water-isolated sites, chosen for their impregnability, but within they were full of discomfort and unwholesomeness. Indeed they have furnished the favorite type of architecture for modern prisons; only we give our felons better light and ventilation than these in general afforded. South of the Alps they were no less strongly built for offence and defence, were equally devoid of substantial domestic comforts and refinements, but they retained somewhat of the ancient palatial grandeur of proportions and severe simplicity of forms which had come down from the Etruscans and still obtain in Tuscany. But what most emphasized these fortified homes, and also the ecclesiastical architecture of mediæval Italy, was their lofty towers. The finest specimen of the *campanile* is that of Giotto belonging to the Duomo of Florence, which as regards beauty might have been let down from heaven itself. Those of the churches were of course made to harmonize with the parent

edifices and their religious functions. As a dominating architectural feature, it wholly changed the look of the landscape from what it was in its pagan period. Perpendicular, threatening, warning, and watching masses beetling far up the sky, succeeded to the harmonious, horizontal, but tame lines of the pure classical styles, which had given a look of repose and assured security to the country, quite at variance with the clangor of bells and grim aspect of the towers, particularly those attached to the houses of the nobles. These were built solely for refuge in extreme danger. Each noble's house was for practical purposes a suit of protective armor for himself and his followers. But the tower was the shield that guarded the armor, or the lance that gave the deadly thrust. Every precaution was taken to make it a secure stronghold. The walls were too thick to be battered down, and fire would not harm them. They were solidly carried up to a great height, often several hundred feet, with but few openings for light, while leaving but a small interior area for floors, and the ladders or stone steps which led to the top. Internally they were dark, chilly wells. Externally glum, angular, straight chimneys of Cyclopean dimensions, mostly surmounted by machicolations, which added to their frowning look, as heavy eyebrows do to a man's. A popular law finally either prohibited new ones, or compelled the old to be reduced to an elevation not exceeding one hundred feet. Previously the Italian cities, especially Florence and Siena, as may be seen in thirteenth century paintings, showed such a multitude of these bare shafts rising in stiff grandeur far above the ordinary horizon of architecture, that they seemed like the giant trees of some primitive forest, peeled and stripped of every green and pleasant thing, and turned by some horrid enchantment into stone.

San Gemigiano still retains its group of warlike towers in their original state. It is not easy to demolish them, nor are they available for modern life. Like the keeps, oubliettes, portcullises, and drawbridges of old castles, the armor of knight-errantry, and the instruments of torture of the Inquisition, they serve as reminders of the lives our ancestors led when force was the test of right. The walls of the town are ivy-grown and bright with lovely flowers. Nature has kindly put over them her mantle of the picturesque. But no gracious touch of hers softens the sullen outlook with which the towers of San Gemigiano, planted on the summit of the hill on which the town is built, domineer the country in a circuit of many

leagues; an ominous spectacle, out of tune with the vine and olive landscape that lies at their feet.

I had to pass a night in that which now forms the spine of the solitary inn. In looking up the uninhabitable part, there was a weird cobweb mystery about its deep shadow, especially by the light of a candle, that Doré would have peopled with indescribable horrors; and from my chamber, passages with doors that moved uneasily on their hinges the night through, led off darkly and remotely, one knew not where; while the thick walls oppressed me as if I were in a dungeon, alive with the evil of unhappy lives here extinguished. The morning light was welcome.

History shows us that peoples are extremely tenacious of particular forms, currents of thought, and manifestations of feelings, which have identified themselves with their early growth. It requires a prodigious upheaval of mind to revolutionize and renew them on an altogether different pattern, however intrinsically superior it may be to that in vogue. Even Christianity has not been able to extirpate, in those countries where Grecian and Roman civilization prevailed, all the fashions and inventions of paganism, but has had to adopt many of them, and modify itself to others. How the fundamental exigencies of the old races began and grew into fixed proclivities of mind and body, firmly rooted in their blood, we may speculate about, but scarcely hope to actually find out. Whenever the current of a nation's life has once chosen its course, it is extremely difficult to change it; usually it is largely prompted in its choice by climate and external circumstances; and that which in the outset was mostly the result of material pressure or persuasion, or had its germ in it, finally becomes a permanent rule of taste, and is more identified with inherited associations of pleasure and force of habit than with any absolute necessity of life. Thus Grecian and Etruscan forms of architecture have always kept the upper hand in Italy, though their supremacy has been contested by others, which, being more directly the result of Christian faith and sentiment, were better adapted to express them.

*Origin, aim, and scope of Gothic.*

The first influx of this kind was the semi-barbarous Lombard feeling, before mentioned, as having been speedily absorbed and controlled by the dominant local styles, and leaving in them but inconsequential memorials of its invasion. Despite its vigor, dome, column, architrave, and pediment — the indigenous pagan anatomy of architecture — kept their places.

They might coquet with new faces, but would not put them on an equal footing with themselves.

Their home-rule, however, was fated to be severely tested by a new style, differing in all respects from theirs. It was born of a hostile race, inspired by a creed which had supplanted heathenism everywhere, developed in a climate and nature the reverse of theirs; lawless where they were orderly, unseemly where they were seemly, undisciplined where they were constrained; as varied, flexible, and strange as they were the contrary. And this was not all. Its organic lines and ethical aspirations were antagonistic to the classical. North of the Alps it had overcome every style that disputed the soil with it, had outgrown them in elaborated science and adaptation to the needs of civilized communities, and in consequence crossed the mountains with the prestige of invincibility. It had also in its favor that the peoples who originated it ruled in Italy, which then had no political unity or national ambition. Even their common religion was in closest sympathy with its æsthetic character; its associations and forms were free of any taint of paganism, while they were specially suited to meet the requirements of the Catholic ritual. As architecture, it was a virgin-bride for the Roman Church; immaculate, beautiful, transcendent. Yet, disregarding the example of the rest of Christendom, the Roman Church refused to take to its heart the lovely Christian maiden that came from the north to offer herself as a legitimate spouse in place of the pagan mistresses with whom it had so long dallied.

This looks strange. It will seem more so on examining further the claims of the new style to replace preceding ones as the special architecture of the Church. In confronting the classical on its natal ground, it was indeed one extreme meeting another to struggle for victory. There was no possibility of harmonious union. The essence of the one organic form counteracts that of the other. Whenever an attempt is made to unite the styles, both suffer. It is like passing a law that is certain to be vetoed; indeed worse, because, while futile legislation is soon forgotten, incongruous architecture remains in sight to pervert public taste. Much was tried in this way in Italy, out of the old habit of the Roman Church to keep to her own fashions, and make all others subservient. But every intermingling with the Gothic of any element, not in harmony with its intent and organic lines, is a scar on its beauty and a confusion of its purpose. We find evidence of this in those ecclesiastical edifices erected in Italy in

the first flush of enthusiasm for its novel visitor, while in the few in which in the main they adhered to its laws, we recognize at once its superior adaptation to a spiritual belief, to those constructed on the general plan of pagan buildings of worship. After some abortive experiments, Italy rejected Gothic for classical forms, and has never since swerved from her first passion.

Some writers declare the Gothic to be a natural growth out of preceding styles; as it were an orderly transmission and development of germs contained in them. This can be true only in the generic affinity of all human work, as the product of mind. Those who find a more intimate relation, I opine, are influenced by the various amalgamations attempted as it came in contact with other forms, rather than by an examination of its essential attributes. For instance, a cursory look at the "Duomo" of Florence would convey the impression that it was Gothic. But a more critical view will show that, although Gothic details have been effectively used, they are subordinated to the guiding lines of classical architecture. Even the pointed arches of the interior are cold and unsatisfactory, done more as a novelty than from any genuine liking. The façades of the cathedrals of Siena and Orvieto, though not completely Gothic, come nearer its true feeling. In both the upright line domineers their constructive character. Milan alone offers a great Gothic cathedral pure in inception and design, the work of a German, though subsequently marred by Italian interpolation of details foreign to its spirit.

Mixed styles afford but an indifferent clew to the original sources of an art. To get at them, we must go to original examples.

How, where, and with whom did Gothic architecture originate? Broadly speaking, it owed its being to races beyond the northern slope of the Alps, considered as barbarians by the peoples of Italy, just as nowadays Europeans talk of Americans and Russians, without reflecting that if the standard of polite culture is lower than theirs, it is more than compensated in the masses by freshness of thought and intense national ambition. Such a condition is especially favorable for a vigorous and original development of character, and consequently of new and striking forms of civilization. Greece and Italy had had their opportunity, and grandly responded to it. It was now the turn of races younger in civilization to contribute to the universal progress by the development — as in what concerns my topic — of an architec-

ture of a higher religious character, greater variety of shape and flexibility of form, and at the same time better suited to their circumstances, than any then known. As a reflection of themselves, it necessarily embodied their intellectual characteristics as well as the essence of their faith.

We have noted how in the Lombard style some of this northern feeling crossed the Alps, and showed itself in a strange, almost barbarous aspect. This was a forerunner of the Gothic movement. Both possessed a perceptible pagan element coming down from the time when black forests covered Central Europe, and the ancestral imagination was quickened by a lively belief in a mythology of congenial aspect and attributes to the savageness of the daily life about it. This fostered a prolific demonology. But the deep shadows of the mysterious, untamed nature that met the primitive Teuton on every side were offset by other and more loving associations with the landscape, which incited in him manliness, religious-mindedness, respect for woman, naïve suggestions of a happier existence, and visions of unreal things. His body grew hardy, and his mind imaginative, amid his native scenery. There was further developed in him self-reliance and a rugged individuality. These were joined to those special qualities that arise out of the contingencies of the periods of barbarisms of all intellectual races, — fierceness with strength, a childish flow of spirits, and social desires alternated by gloom and distrust, and a grotesqueness of fancy which, unchecked, tended to the vulgar and obscene. These conditions and qualities did not always appear together or with equal force among the aboriginal tribes whose descendants invented the Gothic architecture, but in some degree, varying in different localities, they did always exist; and their spirit, controlled or modified by Christianity, entered largely into it. Knowing this, it no longer seems strange that the Italians should have had no hearty liking for an architecture which derived its characteristic traits from ideas and modes of life with which they had no sympathy, indeed were absolutely repugnant to them. The cause of their neglect of it lay deeper in human nature than even a community of rites and creeds. Gothic architecture was the æsthetic fruit of a race whose blood, nourished by a wholly different diet, has always left an uncongenial impression on the Italian mind of all it has ever done in art.

But the psychological gulf between the Italian and German as regards architecture does not end here. What has just been

observed of the constitutional tendencies of the Teutonic and Gallic minds refers chiefly to them as developed in their native wilderness under the influence of heathenism. The bias which they thus received indeed gave to Gothic architecture fundamental qualities of freedom, variety, originality, a quaint mixture of the common and imaginative, exhaustless invention, and intense esotery of feature, whether as to detail or entirety. And so we find its mental roots strike down to heathen soil. But had it received no other nutriment, it never would have risen to the spiritual height it finally did. Christianity grafted in fresh races not yet moulded into stagnating despotisms, but accustomed to vigorous individual and coöperative action, and earnest in their feelings, was exactly the influence needed to expand these primitive germs into an architecture as new as it was lovely. Its specific excellence was founded on its recognition of the *illimitable* as the supreme idea. All previous non-cognate styles are limited in law, scope, and expression. From a given section a perfect whole could be made by simple expansion of the embryonic model. They were strictly æsthetic problems based on mathematical data readily solved, or at least confined to definite intellectual bounds, and manifesting mundane ambitions. This cannot be said of isolated Gothic forms or fragments of edifices. The animating spirit could not be locked up in prescribed formula and shapes, for its very essence was infinite. Palpitating with young life, seeking to incarnate in dumb matter the spiritual hopes and fears of men, both for time and eternity, it recognized no limit to its action except those general laws which governed matter itself. No one was empowered to decide what only it might use, invent, or create. None had the right to declare that this or that thing in the natural world, or borrowed from the unseen, should be proscribed. If anything created of man can be a law unto itself, ever evading repetition, formalism, or giving a prosaic reason for its being, it surely is Gothic architecture. In this respect it is akin to the restlessness and variety of nature in its attempts to manifest the Soul of the Universe. This boundless freedom of choice and combination of general forms and minute details applies to its constructive being. The religious instinct, when pure and simple, either in prayer or material aspiration, inevitably looks upward, but with bowed head, as best befits man before his Maker. Hence, as in Gothic architecture, it chooses *perpendicular* lines whereby to express its yearning, singly, or in gradually drawing together

masses, as the spire externally lost in the blue of the sky or internally in pointed arches whose nice junctions are hidden in the symbolical glories of the artificial heavens that they pierce, while bowing over and protecting the worshipper. Its whole force is given to express the longings of the man spiritual; a perpetual, unfulfilled, but never given-over struggle to mount to those regions where alone supreme felicity is to be secured. Other styles attain their ideal repose. The objects of their creation being secured, nothing remains to hope or try for. Classical architecture seeks to reduce certain definite ideas to prescribed forms. Hence its lavish use of limiting and confining lines. Gothic, on the contrary, tending to lose natural forms in spiritual ideas, seizes on those which suggest neither beginning nor end; their unseen foundations pointing to an endless downwards as their scarcely perceptible tops do to an endless upwards; each a suggestion of the possible immortal condition of the human soul, according as it rejects or receives the religion placed tangibly before it in the intermediate sanctuary. There is no bridging over, materially or spiritually, the dividing chasm of the classical and Gothic architectures.

My comparison may seem too finely put or fancifully drawn out, but these vital differences grow on my mental view, as my experience of both enlarges. Ecclesiastical Gothic is a loving, enthusiastic attempt to embody the history and inspirations of Christianity in congenial forms. The genius of its authors has caused it to stand without a rival for its special purpose of divine worship. Each nation with whom it sprang into being almost simultaneously and spontaneously stamped on it local traits while agreed in general character. Rénan claims that it originated in the immediate neighborhood of Paris, and that French architects introduced it into England and Germany. Whether this is precisely true or not is immaterial to my purpose. France, Spain, England, and Germany varied its details according to their national temperaments and changes in architectural taste. In all it was a spasmodic, enchanting effort, attaining in none to a perfect religious development, or a final exhaustion of its capacities, seldom even a structural completion, before it passed out of fashion, superseded, in most instances, by bastard classicalism imported from Italy to meet the views of ruling classes who considered only how they could best solidify their temporal interests.

English Gothic is staid, more scientific than others in ex-

pression, indulging less in fancy or mysticism; more solemn and more simple, but finally losing its finest imaginative qualities in monotonous repetitions of parallel lines whose primitive significance is lost in mathematical formula of building. There is, however, something in the old roof-tracery that recalls the ocean; a sort of wild break or gentle toss dying melodiously away into joyful stone-foam, or mournful diapason of departing strength, as the wave-ripple washes lightly over the white sands, or the breaker rolls its solemn chant along the trembling shore.

*German Gothic.* Germany puts more of the romantic, weird, and speculative into her forms. The grotesque and spiritual keep company. Color, too, plays a greater rôle, while sculpture knows no limits of fancy. Her Gothic is richer and more metaphysical than that of England, inclining at times towards realistic homeliness of invention. As a whole, it is nearer allied to the Spanish, which is particularly imposing and magnificent.

*French Gothic.* It is to the French mind that the Gothic owes its most graceful, delicate, and fanciful expression, breaking up its strength into a flamboyant lightness and sparkle that rivals the gleamy play of flame itself. If the English took their finest movement of roof-swell from the sea, the French were not less guided by the opposite element in the stone-traceries they shot upwards toward heaven in burning window, soaring buttress, and gleesome spire. Theirs was a daring attempt to transform the solid into the incorporeal, or what looked so to the imagination, so transcendently vision-like did they rear their cathedrals; not so much spiritual in feeling to the soul, as *spirituel* in sentiment to the mind. All that was finest and best in French genius found scope in them as in nothing else before and since. At the same time the home-devils of their specific legacy of human nature lurk there, sometimes much concealed, but never wholly cast out; grotesque, obscene, bestial imps, cruel and scoffing; the counteracting powers of those forces which sought to realize in architecture a pure Christian type, in which material beauty and devout desire should be consistently united in glorifying God and comforting men.

*The Cathedral.* The particular virtue of feature of the Gothic is its constructive individuality. No two edifices are alike. Its essence eludes copying and repeating; for if not easier, it is certainly pleasanter, to create anew than to mechanically repeat

anything. Classical temples had a family likeness. Gothic cathedrals have a spiritual resemblance, with the greatest diversity of features. One-man skill characterizes classical architecture. Each detail of sculpture, painting, or form must be subordinated to a given central organization, or else it becomes a tasteless and deformed object. As it is begun, so it must be finished, and the completion can be seen in the mind's eye before a stone is laid. There may be intellectual pleasure in viewing a perfect temple, but there is no surprise to the imagination. Now all this is reversed with the Gothic. Many men of many minds design and make it. Their religious purpose suffices to give them a unity of effect and meaning. All else takes its rightful course by virtue of those laws of creative freedom and variety which makes the constitution of Gothic architecture operate like that of Nature. Things *grow* into their proper places and colors. The highest inventive labors of architect, sculptor, painter, mosaicist, metal-worker, carver, glass-stainer, and workmen of every grade, one generation after another, patiently looking forward to the perfect end, in enthusiastic concert carry forward to their complete architectural fruition, for their common welfare, the profoundest ideas and deepest emotions of a people concentrated in their most momentous interests in the future, as well as liveliest ambitions in the present life.

It is easy to see that a Gothic cathedral built in this spirit allowed to every one employed in it ample scope for the exercise of his particular talent. Honest brain and hand work, not senseless machine labor, such as kills the life of modern building, fill the chief part. The architect defined its anatomy, and gave to it spiritual comeliness of shape, according to the promptings of his own genius. There was also space and place outside and in for all kinds of artists to give free swing to their talents. Being a type of a Christian commonwealth, hierarchal in government, but democratic in recognizing the worth of the individual without reference to birth or riches, and putting him in his right place within its jurisdiction, admitting all on an equal footing to its spiritual privileges, its intellectual or artistic entertainments, and its protective repose: [1] also being the locality of enactment

[1] In the Middle Ages the cathedral was the house of worship, the lecture-room, the spectacle, and the place of amusement combined; dancing even being introduced, and kept up to this day in the Seville Cathedral on the fête of Corpus Dominus.

of the sacraments which decided individual happiness here and hereafter, a world and heaven in miniature, — the cathedral necessarily had something for each worker to do, some hope, relief, or truth for the needy in spirit, as well as fine music, stirring eloquence, varied and instructive art, and finally a hearty welcome for every comer. No other class of buildings combines so many functions affecting the welfare of man in such harmonious concentration and for so wide-spread and lofty purposes. None other has fixed itself so firmly in the universal heart; once to create, and now to preserve in recognition of its past good.

The true ecclesiastical Gothic is an image of the soul's present progress and final reward. Its walls are carved and painted over with Bible histories and mysteries of faith, lives and effigies of famous men, always either an example or warning; deeds of ennobled ancestors now lying in marble-sleep on their monuments, whose white glimmer comes through the solemn shadow of overhanging vaults like a spectral light from a ghostly world; grateful memorials of science, learning, and benevolence, whatever distinguishes a man from the common herd; holy allegory and symbol, or leaf, flower, bird, animal, quaint invention and curious fancy, anything the artist's free-will could find to do, carved on column, capital, shaft, or doorway; an every-day world around, and a celestial world above; men and angels in ecstatic communion or gazing on the Birth, Baptism, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus; the Last Judgment, Hell and Heaven, with their lost and redeemed multitudes; all this and much else dimly or vividly seen as light and shadow alternate, at one instant dark and foreboding, the next flashing, in gem-like colors as rays of sun strike on them through stained glass, lighting the whole interior as if the painted saints and prophets that inhabit the windows had actually come back from heaven, and were flooding the sanctuary with celestial beauty; heart, intellect, and soul all quickened into new life; the bad reproved, the weak strengthened, the good rewarded, every human condition addressed, and its future lot forecast: such is the moral scope and material showing of a complete mediæval cathedral. There is something sublime in its appeal and promise to all men, something distinctive and apart from all other forms of æsthetic speech. And while it assures hope to the inquiring heart, it preaches action to the languid, and has a curse for the false hearted; for it is even more the embodiment of the spiritual disquiet of man than of his repose.

Although I place so high an estimate on the Gothic, as an art-exponent of Christianity, it is not wholly based on what it positively accomplished, broad and beautiful as this is. Happily for it, as before hinted, in its contemplation, form loses itself in idea. This alone casts a spell over the critical faculties, and leaves the imagination at liberty to evoke out of its own consciousness anything wanting for its constructive completeness or more perfect rendering of the religious motive. Instinctively the mind accepts its spiritual suggestiveness, closing its outward senses to material shortcomings in masses or æsthetic incompleteness of details. No other styles assert for themselves a corresponding charity of judgment, for they challenge comparisons between specific laws and their execution. Any variation from the established rules of composition of classical architecture becomes painfully apparent to the instructed person, like discord in music or a jumble of feet in poetry; while vagaries in ornamentation have the same disagreeable effect on the eye that false grammar has on the ear. Now the Gothic in this respect resembles the truly Christian character, which is its prototype. So manifest are its virtues, and so exalted the standard it sets up as an example, that it becomes with the building as with the righteous human being: our veneration overlooks those trivial defects which are inherent in the earthly man and his work. Moreover, the latitude of omission and commission, rule and license, order and variety, which is the birthright of the Gothic, added to its truly catholic motives, makes it difficult to fix on any formula of criticism of universal application. Born of the spirit, it cannot be otherwise than best-beloved of the soul. Loyal to the moral causes of its origin, Worship and Good-will, it ever was. Yet it did not reach the perfection these two sentiments were capable of bestowing, if allowed to operate on the human mind undisturbed by conflicting passions. A superior development of ecclesiastical architecture in this form is, however, not a question for present consideration. The development that did occur was the best possible under the circumstances, most creditable to its authors, and encouraging to humanity for future action. As if anticipating its premature death, like the fabled notes of the dying swan, the melody of the "frozen music" was sweetest not long before the invention of printing, which more than any other single cause led to its rapid decline on the soil of its birth, aided as it was by the fundamental changes of political thought and religious feeling brought about

by the contemporaneous appearance of Protestantism in Germany and the Renaissance in Italy.

My subject would expand too much were I to go into an analysis of the Gothic as it appeared in mediæval civic and domestic buildings, especially as the latter are of a transient nature, seldom attaining longevity, and ever subject to personal caprice. Both, however, possess great interest artistically and ethically. Each sprung from kindred sources to the ecclesiastical, and were developed into corrresponding, fascinating aspects of odd luxuriance, and conceits of forms and colors, and an intermingling of babarous instinct and habits with the more orderly aspirations of incipient civilizations struggling for æsthetic breathing-space and legal protection.

*Effect of printing on the Gothic.* In saying that printing had much to do with the disuse of the ecclesiastical Gothic, I do not imply that the two cannot exist together, but simply that the immediate effect in races prone to reasoning, was to supersede the sensuous language of art as the chief medium of instruction. Hitherto the intellectual appeal to the people had been based on a ritual which, admitting no questioning, was presented in forms impressive to the senses, and exciting to the feelings. Emotional training was attractive and facile, but one-sided. Consequently, when articles of faith came to be discussed, the mental energies which had found such an enthusiastic vent in architecture were turned more into the channel of abstract thought, which was communicable to the masses most readily by means of books and preaching. Words got the ascendency over Art as the exponent of ideas, just in the proportion that the exercise of individual reason was admitted in matters of religious belief. Science, which had been subordinated to theology ever since the Church claimed infallible power, began to make its influence felt in every phase of life. Wherever common education has been diffused, books have driven art into the background in popular favor and understanding, simply from the facility with which they are multiplied, their adaptability to the mental wants of every class, and the cheapness and compactness with which they disseminate ideas and present æsthetic images to the imagination. High art, especially of a sacred character, reached its climax in painting, sculpture, and architecture, just at the epoch that printing began to be popularly disseminated. No sooner was this made universal than the former faded out, or passed into inferior forms and motives, from which it has

never since emerged, while the printed word has acquired a greater authority each successive century of its existence.

Although printing affected the entire relation of art to civilization by its function of substituting abstract for concrete idea, out of art itself there came a revolution which transformed its outward aspects, and turned it into other directions; a revolution forced on it by literature, which had opened anew to the European mind the long closed philosophies, poetry, and histories of ancient Greece and Rome. When Raphael wrote to Count Castiglione, "I would fain revive the beautiful forms of antiquity," he tersely expressed the universal desire of the cultivated classes of Italy of his time to *recreate* classical art and knowledge, partly from weariness of the mediæval, the wider sphere science was attaining, and its tendency to substitute naturalism for spirituality in art, and in part because the excessive assertion of the Church in doctrine, joined to its license of action, had reacted in thoughtful minds in two ways—one set vainly wishing to reform the Church; another, and that which wielded its power, to use it simply as an instrument to forward their personal schemes of ambition or pleasure, while at heart scoffing its tenets, and ridiculing its ceremonies. No secular princes were more unscrupulous in morals and politics, or greater hypocrites than the popes at this juncture. Concubinage, simony, blasphemy, poisonings, and crimes of every degree of depravity, perpetrated under cover of intrigues and blandishments, such as only the base side of the Italian intellect is capable of conceiving, were the common order of things. It is only necessary to name the Borgian, Farnesian, and Medicean popes, to recall an appalling picture of wickedness, sometimes braving the sunlight, but usually veiling itself in an artistic magnificence and riotous luxury, which fascinated minds whose congenial proclivities were tempered by no moral sensibilities. When these high-priests of religion were not ferocious in their passion to raise themselves or their illicit children to the grade of temporal princes, inveigling and slaughtering those who resisted, they gave rein to grotesque indecencies which showed how utterly they had thrown off religious restraints. Leo X. amused himself with tossing monks in blankets,—doubtless he thought that the best use he could put them to—and foot-races of naked men.[1]

[1] One of his statutes decrees that if an ecclesiastic publicly cursed God, ridiculed Christ, or said obscene things about him or the Holy Virgin, he was to

The great fact, however, as affecting art was, that with these demoralized rulers, embued with the sensuality rather than the beauty of classical life, the sincere worship of God, such as had been indicated in preceding styles of architecture and art in general, was changed into the only sincerity they were still capable of; namely, the worship of themselves. Nero, Tiberius, and Caligula made themselves *gods*, and, by decrees of the Roman Senate, compelled worship to be paid them on that score. True, Caligula generously made his horse pontiff, while Nero, with equal self-appreciation, shared his divinity with a monkey. But the ambition of their papal successors, satiated with divine honors as the vicegerents of God, was most concerned to secure reverence on the basis of earthly distinctions. Religion was made a political blind to keep the masses loyal. I am so disgusted with the lives of most of the popes and princes who were contemporary with the Renaissance — not of art as the French critics employ this term, including the mediæval epoch, but in reference to the revival of pagan styles — that I scarcely have patience to allude to them at all. But it was their patronage that fashioned the taste of this period, and, in conjunction with printing and preaching, revolutionized the art of Christendom. Good, however, has come to the world out of their wickedness, Religious opinion, whenever it had been supreme, had shown itself intolerant alike to the liberal culture that comes of free study and the growth of civic independence. The skepticism of the popes promoted a spread of knowledge and a latitude of tastes which their piety would have repressed; while their ambitions and that of the secular sovereigns to form powerful states on the principle "*c'est moi*," eventually enlarged the influence of the subject, and led to the supremacy of civil over theological law, to humanity's gain. No thanks to the sovereigns, however!

*The Renaissance. St. Peter's.*

Let us glance at the changes brought about in architecture by the Renaissance, and the uses it was put to. The truth and beauty of classical forms, rightly understood and applied, I have already admitted. Further, it must be conceded that the genius of architects like Brunelleschi,

be fined one fourth of his income. There was a sliding tariff for blasphemy or other sins which could be made lucrative to the pope's exchequer. In Germany, previous to the Reformation, the only concern of the priests was, not to conceal their fornications, but how to outwardly reconcile their having children with their clerical functions and duties.

Buonarotti, Raphael, Bramante, San Gallo, Sansovino, and Wren, was not merely capable of reviving them in much of their original spirit, but also of adapting them to new uses and ideas. They could not transfer to them the spiritual essence and functions of the Gothic, but they reared magnificent edifices especially suited to material pomp and luxury, whether of church or state, and of tastefully decorating them in accordance with their purposes, their motives being chiefly drawn from the classical element, or executed in a manner congenial to it. St. Peter's at Rome is the grandest and richest type of the modern classical, imperial architecture, in dimensions, features, and aim, as illustrating the universal power and absorption of the world's riches and homage, for which the political popes strove. Strictly speaking, it is a monument of papacy without religious significance; as an object of intellectual wonder perhaps unrivalled. I write of it rather as it was finally meant to be by Michael Angelo than as it actually is in many of its details, which, if not shams in material, are often tasteless, misplaced, and incongruous, disturbing the grandiose impression which would otherwise be left on the mind. Great geniuses seldom have an opportunity to carry out their conceptions unfettered by the caprices of those who contribute the means, or unharmed by the incapacity of the workmen who execute them. Hence, to adequately realize their intentions, we must divest them by an effort of will of all foreign matter and subsequent deviations, particularly if the subject in question belong to the composite classical styles of architecture, which little learning and any blunder is sure to ruin in point of taste. The Gothic may be rude in masses and details, with strange contrasts of ornamentation and forms such as nature exhibits, or intricately delicate and light in traceries, surcharged with carvings and colors, mysteries within mysteries, and yet appear the more bewitching from the free exercise of so many minds and hands moved by a common impulse. Taste here has a roving commission, with wings to search out aerial surprises. But in the other case it is shackled by a despotic law of constructive fitness, unity, and narrowness of selection, not always clearly penetrated by those who profess obedience to it.

We have only to contrast the remarkable buildings of the Gothic and Renaissance styles to discover at once the gulf that separates them. St. Paul's of London and the Pantheon at Paris are noteworthy examples of scholastic formalism and

aristocratic egoism, grand but barren monuments, as regards religion, while the Madéleine Church of the last named city is a conclusive proof of the spiritual incapacity of a Greek temple for a Christian house of worship. The more ornate and sumptuous it is, the more positively it betrays its lack of devotional feeling. Made simple, it harmonizes with teaching or preaching addressed to the reason; all the better because nothing spirit-moving finds a home on its colorless, conventional wall-surfaces or areas, when unbroken by arch or column. This specially commends it for a lecture-room, and is perhaps the cause of its being in great favor in Protestant countries for meeting-houses, in which divine service is restricted to a prayer, hymn, and sermon. The form and proportions of a pagan temple are adapted to these purposes; but after stripping it of its sacred images, beautiful altars, and fine sculpture, there remains in its interior little of what gave it an æsthetic character or quickened the emotions. Everything now depends on the preacher, nothing on the edifice; and it can be used for political, secular, or sacred callings without compromise of taste, because there is none to offend.[1]

One extreme of Protestantism was guided by a sound principle of selection in choosing the temple-type of architecture. None other so completely dissevered itself from all necessity of a ritual, was freer from association with Roman Catholic mythology and ceremonies against which it protested, or was more readily converted to the intellectual needs of societies who had as sincere a regard for abstract as their religious opponents had for emotional teaching; one thinking and proving, the other seeing and believing. The fitness of one style was the unfitness of the other, because the sentiments connected with each were diverse and opposing. For real warmth of heart and spirituality of organic form, we must look back to mediæval

[1] In Catholic countries, human dwellings and occupations in an humble way often cluster about the walls of cathedrals, growing into them as naturally as ferns to forest-trees, and, while receiving strength and protection, contributing to the picturesqueness of the entire mass. There is, too, a moral fitness in man's nestling in the shadow of the great symbol of his faith, that counterbalances the architectural disfigurement that sometimes happens. But nothing can atone for the religious and æsthetic incongruity of the Protestant habit of turning portions of churches into shops and warehouses, especially as has been seen in the Park Street edifice, Boston, the basement once being an "ice-cream depot" while a dentist's sign hung to a column of the porch, advertising unmistakably a copartnership between God and Mammon.

cathedrals, like those of York, Salisbury, Strasbourg, Rheims, Amiens, Chartres, St. Stephen's, and their numerous compeers. The Renaissance in Catholic countries and Protestantism elsewhere put a stop to these. While their ideas and tastes remain in the ascendant, none others will be built like them. But both the Renaissance and Protestantism have done good service to men in their respective ways. Protestantism was a wholesome reaction, requisite to arouse mind from its proneness to live only in its emotions and passions, and to set it thinking about justice, truth, science, and discovery. Hence, although the æsthetic and even spiritual sense for a while be drifted in an opposite direction by the incoming tide of materialistic progress, yet I believe a healthy mental equilibrium will at last be established, resulting in fresh architectural types of so fine a nature as to put a stop to regret for those of the past. There are hopeful symptoms in the growing recognition, especially in England, of the fundamental virtues of Gothic forms, and their capacity to respond to our more spiritual and imaginative wants, while justice is likewise done to the classical by putting them to those uses for which their nature best qualifies them. But this is rather an anticipation of the future than the exact case at this moment. Knowledge meantime is sifting and proving, teaching taste how to act and enjoy. That this may be guided aright, it concerns civilization to keep its eyes open to the mischief done to it by the Renaissance after it passed from the control of great masters into the hands of mean men.

The evil from it was greater in Catholic than in Protestant lands, because as regards art there was more to lose, while the saving principle of abstract teaching and the new, utilitarian fashion of church buildings, to which the classical type was easily adjusted, did not apply at all. I will not cite Spain in this connection. Ever since its destinies passed out of the keeping of the Moors, it has been as isolated and exceptional a country in what relates to art, science, and religion as Japan, without influence on general civilization, while it deliberately ruined its own from bigoted and suicidal motives. Although Italy was the seat of the papacy, it has not sinned in this stupid manner. Criminal in act and low in desire it often was, but it never altogether forgot its æsthetic constitution transmitted from antiquity, and a certain political breadth or religious license of view, shutting its eyes to immaterial points, which habit also came from its large-headed ancestry. Rome be-

comes sanguinary only when its power is really in jeopardy. A mere imbecile conformity of rite and confession in the minutest detail, to substantiate a "divine-right" despotism, sanctioning the foulest wrongs by blasphemous religious formula, after the fashion of the Spanish Bourbons, never obtained in Italy. Whenever pope and prince sinned or revelled, they did it fairly and squarely before the world, without other sacrilegious nonsense than the usual magniloquent customs and hypocritical speech common to sovereign-worship everywhere. With them conformity was more a question of habit than principle. They were not over curious to pry into what might be underneath the external act. This shrewd policy of not hearing or seeing what there was no positive occasion to, permitted in art, literature, and social intercourse a scope unknown to other Latin races. Neither the Inquisition nor religious persecution ever got supreme control in Italy, as in Spain and France. A restless selfhood inherited from the old Roman citizen, basing itself on an instinctive clinging to certain personal rights, or rather privileges, whether for good or evil, as for instance, to have bread and shows gratis; to speak and act their minds in squibs, pantomime, or satire; to be exacting and revengeful in matters that directly concerned their pleasures and desires; childlike except in innocence, such has long been characteristic of Italian peoples. Their æsthetic temperament is easily excited and directed. Hence the patronage of the ruling classes decided in the main the public taste; and the more facilely because of the sympathy between the nobles and common people in matters of entertainment and public spectacles. After the mediæval epoch, there was no independent, popular action in affairs of art. Savanarola's appeal to the people, though not without transient effect, was the last effort made to keep art from going over soul and body into the keeping of those imbued with the tastes and politics of the Renaissance, which yearly grew more indifferent to the wishes and welfare of the masses.

Formerly, governments were many, frequently changing, and much controlled by the commercial and manufacturing classes, who in matters of art acted in harmony with the clergy. All ranks were ambitious of distinguishing themselves by the promotion of works, like the Loggia of the Piazza Signoria at Florence and the Tabernacle of Orgagna, which should reflect credit on their particular liberality and taste, besides being use-

ful and edifying to the public. Their best skill and means were given to the honor of religion and the glory of their country. But with the Renaissance there came about an increased consolidation of petty commonwealths and democratic towns into small states, in which the elective rights of the people were either wholly extinguished or only admitted under the control of absolute rulers, unscrupulous as to the method by which they attained power, and made it hereditary in their families. The elimination of the popular element in politics of necessity affected art, causing a complete change in its spirit and forms for the worse, most conspicuous in architecture. Tyrants are more given to reflecting themselves in art than even democracies, because the latter may be very busy about every-day interests, while with the former, unless there is war, it is the only grand passion by which they may glorify themselves. The character of most of the new rulers being particularly infamous, the art they fostered was in keeping with the man-idolatry and the sensualities to which it was chiefly dedicated. I refer to a subsequent phase of the Renaissance, when the race of great, original masters had died out. Executive skill was never wholly wanting in the artist, nor pedantic learning in amateurs, but the feeling behind both was ignoble and shallow. Art became academic, cold, and external. If it were not subjected, as in Spain, to a religious inquisition, it had to conform to a political one, even more debasing in spirit, though less narrow in taste. Every branch of it grew to be artificial, formal, and forced. There was no genuine inspiration of natural or popular ideas; nothing to touch the heart, excite the imagination, or instruct the mind. Affectation replaced sincerity, attitudinizing succeeded to grace and dignity of movement, and material bigness was thought to be equivalent to moral and æsthetic greatness. The standard of right and wrong in art was violently reversed for the people.

*Rococo Renaissance.*

Where there is extravagant power, there must be extravagant patronage. With this lever one base mind can make a thousand even baser than his own. The Italian subjects who had taken the places of Italian citizens, learned to accept with due thankfulness and admiration the vicious, pompous art given them to incite to greater reverence of rank and riches; and finally their tastes were so perverted that they never have had since a genuine appreciation of anything that was not spectacular, or savored of state or personal ostentation, and mere tech-

nical dexterity. After the extinction of the primitive religious and classical schools, and the sensuous triumphs of color of those of Venice and Parma had been frittered into inaneness by mechanical imitators, there was left nothing worthy of the name of Italian art. The sincerity, purity, and truth of expression that came in with the native-born schools of Niccola Pisano and Giotto, afterwards strengthened by the epic naturalism of Masaccio and perfected by Leonardo; the classic grace and beauty of Raphael, and the supernal force and idea of Michael Angelo; in fine, all that made Italy as original as famous in art, came to a premature end.

Before the Christian era a similar event occurred, in consequence of the introduction of Greek forms, made fashionable by Roman emperors, swayed by the same motives that governed their petty successors and imitators. In the case of antiquity, however, the beauty of the Greek idealized the conceptions of the native artist, so that, for a brief period, the union was a happy one. It was a natural one also, on account of a common faith. The difference, therefore, was merely in treatment, not in motive. Finally the indigenous Etruscan feeling was overborne by aristocratic influences of a foreign growth, largely Asiatic, which destroyed all that was good and perfect in art generally, precisely as, fifteen centuries later, the revival, not of pure antique forms, but of the imported Grecian in their decadence, manipulated to meet the corrupt tastes of the defunct pagan imperialism, quenched the more wholesome, indigenous art of Italian mediævalism. This reappearance of the same destructive agency, invited by a similar aristocratic will for the same vainglorious, selfish aims, is a striking coincidence of history. The last master of original and sturdy individuality, realistic in bias, who made a vigorous protest against the current, bastard classicalism, not without effect as seen in the Neapolitan school of painting, was Salvator Rosa. Considering the strength of the academic conventualism by which he was obstructed, his life may be called heroic. After him, however, the flood. Every trace of Gothic freedom of invention and mediæval sincerity of execution vanished. Then and since, Renaissance, chiefly of the most degraded character, has overrun Italy, to the ruin of whatever was innately noble and fine in the native mind.

I will give a brief list of its architectural vices, reserving the defects of sculpture and painting for a later application, although the family relation is a close one in the three.

Ecclesiastical architecture in Italy since the sixteenth century has been of almost uniform ugliness or misapplication of rules and spirit, the churches of the Jesuits being the most cumbered with decorative finery. An effort is made to entrap the senses through the lowest avenues of gratification and deception. Religion is seen either as a splendid show or a superstitious spectacle. For this true art is sacrificed. It is impossible to describe the extraordinary façades which came into fashion, overloaded with columns, whole or split, doing nothing; equally useless pilasters of all lengths, stuck wherever there was space; ornaments without meaning or purpose, where none were needed; vulgar grotesques and obscene devils conspicuous about doors or windows, made hideous by the violation of classic rule and beauty, from wantonness of incapacity; stupendous, ugly urns perched on highest pinnacles, threatening the heads of those who look up to them; clumsy, smirking saints, planted like stone sentinels or juggling acrobats at regular intervals on roofs or in niches, interesting themselves in nothing in earth or heaven; naked, fat boy-angels or gigantic women, with coarse effrontery of limb and posture, performing gymnastic exploits, or reclining in impossible positions in impossible places, their only suggestiveness being one of alarm lest they fall and hurt somebody below, and their sole merit their constructive uselessness, and want of anything to say or do in reference to their being where they are; veritable sculptured nightmares: such is the outer look of many churches. If pigs could be architects, I fancy they would do things in just such a wrong-headed way, from sheer spite of order and beauty.

Interiorily, the confusion becomes more confounded, except that the architect, though doing his best, does not always succeed in spoiling the more dignified features of classical architecture. Their effect, however, is sure to be hurt by preposterous upholstery, relics, shrines, wax-figures, gilt and tinsel properties, to show off the popular idols; tawdry, bedizened, miraculous dolls and pictures; bequests of ignorance and superstition, varying from old clothes, crutches, daubs of pictures, to pearls, rubies, and diamonds; sham and real jewelry; the bones of dead men made more precious than the bodies of living; lies preached of them, and the Word withheld; man-millinery, changes of vestments, the lifting or letting fall, at the appointed time and place, of priests' skirts; buttoning and unbuttoning; much lace and embroidery, tinkling of bells, operatic music,

swinging of censers, bowing, kneeling, pantomime, dronings and mutterings in a dead tongue, making tableaux more or less impressive, and not without scenic value, but as art degraded to its lowest material effects and vulgar appeal; in fact, a shifting spectacle in which the whole and parts are ingeniously perverted from their lawful functions to æsthetic falsities and spiritual impositions. To put art and religion on a lower level, we must fall back on out-and-out fetichism. And this has come from the evoking of a spurious paganism by the heads of the Church to take the place of what had come to it in legitimate course of native-reared art.

The ambition of the baser Renaissance was best gratified by sumptuosity and costliness; lavishness of rich metals and precious stones; by dexterous, complex workmanship, bronze curtains, marble draperies, fantastic tricks, overdone action, and mechanical surprises; in fine, by artistic harlotry of every species, besides a senseless theft of classical objects and motives misapplied in fragments or in wholes, or distorted by a haphazard fancy into positive ugliness. Better Quaker homeliness, or other Protestant architecture, of the rigidest Puritan type and frailty of material; even the pretentious sort, with the sham Gothic steeples astride of sham classical porticoes and similar constructive incongruities. If there were not so much to grieve over in the wasted talent and riches bestowed on the regenerate Renaissance, and its abject servitude and ignorance, one might laugh heartily at the ridiculous figure it cuts. But it is too preposterous an exhibition of human folly to be so lightly passed over, particularly as it spread in various degrees of badness, spoiling the public taste all over Europe, emigrating to America in a mild form, and finding a footing wherever aristocratic misrule obtained.

I am emphatic in my condemnation, because the feelings which begot its meanest aspects yet survive, and persist in disfiguring the earth with structures, if not entirely worthless in a moral and æsthetic sense, still made after the general likeness of the base Renaissance. Where a public is indifferent to its architectural life, and individuals have no lively sense of artistic fitness or unfitness, the direction of taste is left to professional men, who are but too glad to enrich themselves at the least possible exercise of original thought or study. Hence many fashions continue in use after their formative spirit has died out. This is the case with the style in question in some places, the

United States of America for instance, the rich ordering their houses of their architects as they would clothes of a tailor, accepting without question whatever design is given them as being the correct thing of the moment. There can be no independent national character or individualistic expression in architecture, unless it represents the real life of a people, and shapes itself in conformity to local causes. Imported architecture is of necessity a misfit, as is also any attempted revival of styles that have lived out their natural existence. The Renaissance failed in the outset, from its mistaken principle of action. Instead of striving to express in suitable forms the new civic civilization, which was aiming to temper religious feeling with even-handed justice, to improve the material condition of men, and to disseminate knowledge, it went back after obsolete pagan forms, and tried to rival the production of men born under an altogether different state of things. One glance at the Gothic, which it was pushing aside, might have taught it that it could have no genuine life without a genuine soul of its own. To compete successfully with the antique, it had to revive ancient ideas as well as images. In some degree, among a few, this was done, but more from a spirit of pedantry or infidelity to their own religion than from any sincere love of the old. Under such circumstances, the best Renaissant art conceived after the antique, was inferior to its model. The common sort was a mere travesty. A connecting link existed in certain features, derived from sentiments common to both, as they were made the instruments of pompous ignorance, fashionable empiricism, or an absolute will. Superficial nobodies and restless tyrants are always greedy of sensations. The repose of profound knowledge and consummate art is unintelligible and fatiguing to them. What no one else could or would do, that to them is an incitement to do. An Egyptian princess builds a pyramid with the price of her favors. A Roman emperor gilds the oats of his favorite horse, and makes him a deity. Another cuts off the heads of the sculptured gods, and puts his own in their places. Nero makes a bronze image of himself one hundred feet high, at a cost of nearly two million dollars. Cleopatra drinks pearls. Hadrian uses the revenue of the world to make a monstrous pleasure-ground, containing copies of remarkable edifices of all countries, and puts to death the architect, Apollodorus, for criticising his taste. Philip II. of Spain impoverishes his dominions to build a vast palace-tomb in the shape of a gridiron.

Another royal charlatan, Louis *le Grand*, starves France to lodge himself "like a gentleman." The Dukes of Tuscany were delighted with monstrosities, coarse conceits, and obscene grotesques. A Grecian satyr is a joyous waif of nature, delighting in his free, sensuous life; the Renaissant image of his kind is simply embodied lechery. An antique Venus meant perfect female beauty; the mediæval Magdalen, moral purification; but the modern Venus or Magdalen, beginning with Titian's and ending with those of our time, is a seductive woman, who repents only to sin again with fresh zest.

Fools in palaces are invariably complemented by boors in churches, as regards art. To Michael Angelo's Pieta there was given a mock crown and necklace. Brocade robes and tin head-gear were nailed to the pictures of the Madonna and saints by the old masters, as may be seen in "Santo Spirito" at Florence. The finest frescoes got whitewashed or ruthlessly destroyed. This, in brief, is the quality of taste and feeling, begotten by powers unlimited, alike in pagan and Christian countries. The bad man stamps his selfishness or ignorance on the whole world within his reach.

A true artist is the product of his period; the false one, of another's will. Genius, free to act, foreshadows the idealisms and hopes of a people collectively, and becomes the type of its inmost soul; Goethe in Germany, Shakespeare in England, Dante in Italy, Doré in France, and all great masters, in their several ways represent their countrymen. The mischief of the false artist is that he has no guiding will of his own, but is a being moulded to order, bribed or persuaded by external pressure. Hence, as the Renaissance came into greatest vogue at the most flourishing period of petty and great tyrants, and just after the death of the greatest masters, it took whatever shape was prescribed to it, without right of appeal. Once set art agoing in a wrong direction, and it degenerates with accelerating velocity, because, like fire, it feeds its own course. There is no more striking contrast of its good and evil than what occurs in Italy when the artist was the genuine product of his time, and when he was the mercenary workman of despots. The distinction holds with more precision than most generalizations, though there are some exceptions on each side, and some interblendings of freedom and servility, or noble and ignoble art, in one artist or school of either period. Every community has its momentary madnesses, just as every despot

has his moments of magnanimity or common sense. But the profound moral of the history of art, that to be great and good it must be free and true, cannot be too deeply impressed on the minds of a people which, like the Americans, has its art yet to create.

*Honest Renaissance*

Honest Renaissant architecture has qualities which adapt it, when judiciously applied, to state and civic uses. We need not give it up because kings perverted its forms. It specially commends itself to modern life for various purposes. Externally, from its palatial aspect, where orderly dignity and beauty are desired, typical of public authority and use, or as an expression of refined luxury and scholarly acquirements. Like the Gothic, it has never had its complete chance of development and application. Internally it is more manageable for modern domestic life, and requires less original thought. Gothic architecture compels the architect to conceive and invent. Many intricate mechanical problems are to be solved, and æsthetic combinations to be effected. Whereas the Renaissant styles are composed out of the classical, and adjusted to certain definable demands of comfort and elegance. Success is a question rather of taste in composition than of experimentive creation. Most modern Gothic buildings for domestic purposes are commonplace imitations of obvious features of the mediæval ones, and not to be compared in convenience and handsomeness with those constructed after the best designs of the Renaissance. There is ample scope for both styles. Either may be used to advantage according to what is needed, if the architect will but inform himself of the meaning and value of their respective forms, and acquire the skill requisite to their æsthetic solidarity.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MODERN ITALIAN ART, LIFE, AND RELIGION.

*Schools and styles overlap.*

THERE are certain fundamental links in the art of all periods, arising from agencies which cause one epoch to overlap or reappear in another in outward form, if not in living spirit. But before proceeding further, I will recall some of our recent conclusions to show their bearing more emphatically. I stated in substance that the great ancient and mediæval periods of religious art could not be repeated; that in them high art, as it had been comprehended, had reached its climax; and that attempts to revive it on its old foundations must fail despite individual merits. I will now enlarge on this, making my propositions as terse as possible, that they may be easily kept in mind to be tested as occasions happen.

*Depressing effect of books.*

The depressing effect of books on art is felt chiefly in its highest aspects. In the inferior functions printing favors a spread of art and an enlargement of its scope in common matters, for it makes its history and purpose better known, and stimulates its production as a branch of polite culture. Nevertheless, printing tends to take it out of its former spiritual kingdom, in which it reigned supreme as the popular type of man's loftiest idealisms, lowering it from the position of a creator and educator to that of an illustrator and decorator. Ideas were mostly given up to books, as soon as the Reformation gave a little intellectual liberty to the people. They dethroned high art, because printing served them better and cheaper.

The people were right, as indeed they are in general whenever their moral judgment has a fair chance of asserting itself. I do not say that whatever they do is the best that could be done, but that their instincts, when free to act, incline them to a shrewd comprehension of what is conducive to their actual welfare. Here particularly their instincts were keen, because art, except for a short period in Greece and during fitful flashes of democratic, religious enthusiasms in the mediæval ages, had

been associated in their destinies either with ecclesiastical or state despotisms. Ranging from unwholesome extremes of ascetic fanaticisms to gross sensualities, it had too often served idolatry or tyranny. Experience showed them that neither prince nor priest would voluntarily sanction anything which conflicted with their interests. Sometimes, actuated by honorable motives, they had indeed kept art up to a lofty or popular standard. But the people had had no permanent, independent choice as to its forms or spirit. A strict Catholic, even at this late day, receives without demur whatever his superior prescribes, holding himself as personally unaccountable as if it were an ordinance of God. Church or State, not he, is responsible for the bigotries and falsities they impose on him. But the Protestant being trained to exercise his private judgment, is responsible in his individual capacity. This applies as well to matters of taste as opinion. The practical effect is reversed in the two systems. In one the executive force of life centres in the civil or ecclesiastical authority, which gives the initiative to all public acts; while in the other the will of the people decides their direction and character. This fact by itself accounts for the realistic spirit and democratic tastes that art assumed as it passed from the hands of the few into those of the many, the wishes and pleasures of the masses necessarily becoming the chief sources of inspiration. While their intellectual condition remains low there can be no special stimulus to the artist beside gain. The popular inclination, keeping art at its own average of mental ability and taste, bribes even talent to mould itself according to the whim of the moment.

*Effect of Protestantism on art.*

Religion, as a sensuous or ascetic movement, has ceased to govern civilized men. Protestantism turned it more into an inward conviction and moral action, restricting faith to a few abstract doctrines. Much of the reaction against an idolatrous ritual was directed against religious art in general, and brought it into disrepute with the conscience. What in one stage of ideas was a sacred duty to do and foster, in another became a sin. The effect first on conscience, and secondly on art, may be appreciated by watching the different emotions with which a zealous pietist of the Roman Church and a member of a Protestant sect regard sacred effigies and symbols. The edification of the one is the blasphemy of the other. Neither the theorist nor an artist can completely realize in himself mental conditions foreign to those in which he is born and trained. He

may conceive of them as he imagines a strange spectacle or past events, never sure that he is consistent and accurate throughout, and quite certain that he cannot infuse into his mind the genuine feelings of their age. This obstacle precludes any absolute reproduction of effete art. Any such effort is so much absolute loss to the rightful art of the time, beside misdirecting or affronting the public feeling. An artist, therefore, is unwise in leaving his true sphere to try to rival one for which he has no legitimate training. A Polynesian makes a canoe-paddle after an original design that the most skilled European workman would in vain attempt to equal, because he has no real connection with its uses or pleasure in ornamenting it. The imitations of Cashmere shawls, Persian carpets, Chinese porcelain, or any other semi-barbarous artistic work by the manufactures of France and England are unsatisfactory for the same reason. Reproduction of noble architecture after its creative spirit has left the world is equally a failure. We cannot revive temples and cathedrals, for we do not require them as the intense expression of our religion. Our love of them is the liking of the amateur for whatever is artistically true and beautiful. Seeing no prospect of a return to classical or mediæval conditions of civilization, either in Catholic or Protestant countries, I am persuaded that moderns finally will limit their desires towards all such edifices to preserving them as relics of a past forever gone, and seek out for themselves something which shall, when perfected in a correspondingly sincere and lovely manner, express their own idealisms.

The reason why there can be no religious art in Protestant countries, analogous to the old, is clear; but the dying out altogether of that which only a few centuries ago was the great glory of the Catholic faith is not distinctly seen, unless we look into the æsthetic trickery by which the priesthood try to disguise the truth. Their artifices once understood only make the fact more obvious that religious art has died out in those lands where it was first created, or else degenerated into mechanical and lifeless, academic forms, worthless as to spiritual significance, and in general valueless in an æsthetic sense, if not absolutely repulsive, either from sensual effrontery or an affectation of sentiments which no longer inspire the artist. Some exception there is in the labors of a few sincere men, like Flandrin in France and Overbeck in Germany, who have attempted to revive a genuine religious art, and of ecclesiastics who have

enthusiastically labored, with partial success, to build Gothic churches in the old fashion; but they have no weight with the people at large, nor do they in any perceptible degree modify the prevailing materialism of art and peoples. Religious feeling is not, however, extinct. It simply changes its teacher and modes of manifestation wherever free to act. Indeed, its convictions become firmer as it grows less passionate and more enlightened. But while Protestantism has been opposed to any æsthetic development, Catholicism in the mean time has been dividing its multitude into two classes — the profoundly ignorant and superstitious, and those imperfectly educated who doubt or disbelieve altogether, but whose training impels them to a ritual conformity that has no salutary effect on their souls, and in many instances is only done when dying, from a latent fear that otherwise it might go harder with them. Few have the consistent courage of old Perugino, who refused absolution on his death-bed because he wished to test the effect of leaving earth without taking the last sacrament of the church to which he would not confide his spiritual destinies. Like many others, he confused the acts of the professors with the principles of Christianity, while his imagination was not likely to be affected by his own mercenary handicraft. Some of his pictures have a touch of gross satire on high personages in the celestial hierarchy, or else he was culpably indifferent to the rules of propriety in composition. An artist is not prone to superstition or asceticism. Not only is his profession favorable to intellectual liberty, but I mistrust that the close attention to external nature inseparable from the modern systems of art, like the kindred exigencies of physical science, bias the mind towards materialism; at all events, to freethinking or indifference as regards sectarianism. Exceptions of the Fra Angelico type are uncommon, and due chiefly to idiosyncrasies of temperament against which their artistic nature is in perpetual struggle. The careers of the greatest of the old masters prove that it is not necessary to be a bigot, or even what is called a "professor" of religion, to execute religious art of a high character. It was requisite, however, that they should thoroughly comprehend its motives. This is a matter of intellectual and emotional sympathy and appreciation, quite apart from pure dogma, or that intensity of devotion which is the fruit of enthusiastic faith. Some writers claim that religious art is the exact reflection of the character and convictions of the artist, and that his design and coloring have a greater symbolical than

æsthetic intent. As well might we say that an actor should be the original of his part in order to personate it properly. Both artist and actor must be able to feel their subjects, and have an executive capacity corresponding to their importance. Their temperaments qualify their performances, sometimes in harmony with inspiring motives, but often contrary to them. Few of the great masters were rigid in their religious observances, or scrupulous as to the stricter moralities. Raphael painted the most glorious Madonna the world has seen, the spendthrift, scapegrace Sodoma the most lovely Eve, Leonardo the greatest composition of the most profound sacramental mystery, Albert Durer the most subtle allegories, and Michael Angelo the most sublime Biblical scenes and personages, simply because their imaginations were better able to conceive and their hands to execute them than those of other men, irrespective of personal piety. At heart they were true men, highly appreciative of life and the world around them, delightsome companions, averse to bigotries and austerities, not inquisitive as to speculative theology or tenacious of dogmas, but devoting their entire energies to their æsthetic pursuits. He who won the greatest fame for his Holy Virgins had the most exquisite delight in the amorous love of woman. The fervid devotion expressed in Giotto's pictures is wonderful; but he joked somewhat coarsely, according to our notions. Leonardo was the beau-ideal of an accomplished, open-handed man of fashion, beloved by beautiful women and noble men. Poor Albert Durer had too much mundane worriment to find repose in an ideal spiritual world. While Michael Angelo's religious like his political opinions were earnest, they were not current with the Church or his patrons. His austere isolation was caused by want of congenial society and bodily infirmity.

Great mental power joined to well balanced sensuous and moral faculties round off genius, and enable its possessor to do noble work, in whatever direction he may be impressed. The image of his subject is reflected in his imagination, as water receives and gives back whatever overshadows it. Execution or style varies according to habits of thought and work; but if there be a general equilibrium of brain and temperament, as with Holbein, Leonardo, and Raphael, the artist can distinguish himself in whatever field he selects, while the spectator will find greatest delight in that which best responds to his own mental condition. Universal masters have a lively joy in artistic work

of every kind, religious or profane, idealistic, realistic, ascetic, sensuous, sensual, or even erotic. Their constant aim is consummate and varied art, finding something æsthetically good in everything God creates or permits. Hence they have a satisfaction for all tastes. It is a one-sided, narrow criticism that condemns Raphael for abandoning pure, religious art for classical, and ascetic for sensuous or realistic motives, because, when called on for them in the maturity of his genius, he showed himself greater than ever. Greatness is best fulfilled by completeness. Therefore he is greatest who displays the most varied capacity and thoroughness. There are occasions when a great artist is forced out of his legitimate course, and although producing masterly, characteristic work, makes apparent his want of entire sympathy with or perfect comprehension of his topic. We see somewhat of this in the sacred compositions of the luxurious, magnificent Titian; those of the sensuous, sensitive Correggio; the cold-blooded academic electicisms of the Carracci and their scholars; the devotional acerbities of the glowing, diaphanous, but earthly-minded Murillo, and the more powerful designs of the stronger, aristocratic Velasquez; in the vulgar types of the religious art of the pleasure-loving, ambitious Rubens; in the obtrusive coarsenesses and colored strength of the dramatic, plotting Rembrandt; in the incoherent, sparkling eccentricities of the solitude-loving egoist Turner; and in the extravagances of the versatile, erratic Doré. Each of them manifests ineffectual attempts to reduce fundamental qualities of mind and desire to an orderly subjection to motives foreign to their instinctive choice, or which were selected because of opportunity for some coveted technical triumph.

The decay of devotional feeling in the public mind operated to its destruction in art. With Raphael and his compeers the career of religious art closed. Their distinguished successors brought other fashions into vogue. The seductive, sensuous schools they founded, prepared the way for those artificial, debased styles, fostered by a *rococo* taste, which in the end brought art to its present wretched condition, or want of any condition whatever, in Italy and Spain.

*Connection between the religious mind and art of a people.*

The connection between the so-called religious art of modern Catholicism and its spiritual condition of mind is so intimate that I must speak of both in virtually the same terms. How much it can still affect the individual, I will illustrate by a statement made to me by

an accomplished diplomat, educated by the Jesuits. His character was an undisguised compound of wordly insincerity and naïve devotion strange to Protestant notions, but not singular in the light of his theological training. With the usual inconsistency between practice and theory of those most free with women, he adored the Virgin as his special protective deity. So fervid at times were his prayers to her image that he "saw her wink" in approval. This was earnestly and frankly told as a fact which edified him greatly. It is a fair sample of the kind of hold the Roman Church keeps on cultivated minds, by training them to see religion only through the avenues of superstition and idolatry.

The condition of Roman Catholic worship in Italy to-day is not unlike that of paganism in its final decline. There has not been a decisive line of ritual demarkation between them since Christianity lost its early simplicity and sincerity. But the Renaissance made it more than ever difficult to decide where veritable Christian forms and ideas begin, and those of heathenism end. Worship has hinged on the substitution of one set of names and observances for others of a similar disposition, rather than on a radical mental change. Criminal pagan customs were kept up long after the official establishment of the new religion.[1] As late as the fifth century the populace would rush from the churches during divine service to secure the best places in the circuses and amphitheatres before the games began. Even now the masses readily could be led back to their old rites and superstitions by the priests. Fifteen centuries in their charge have left the populace, as respects knowledge and habits, very much as it was in the times of the Cæsars. Idolatrous ceremonies and imposing pageants are still the common features of a religion which discountenances thought, and favors ignorance and despotism; which, controlling education, leaves four in five of the population unable to read or write; which opposes alike material prosperity and mental improvement in the people; whose gifts are fresh canonizations and canons, an increase of supernatural machinery that still further stultify and degrade human intellect, or of a new dogmas barren of moral benefit and repugnant to reason; additional inducements to idleness and beggary; fresh taxes to keep whole communities of men

[1] The worship of Apollo continued until A. D. 529, at Monte Cassino, although it was the seat of a bishopric; his temple and altar being overthrown by St Benedict, when he founded a convent on their site.

and women in soul-wilting isolations and avocations, the evils of which are felt in every fibre of society; that extorts or beguiles wealth from industry to appropriate it to works which carry with them no blessing, not even a wholesome use or comfort for the human species; ecclesiastical sumptuosities of building, and strutting in vain honor of a dead past and mocking neglect of the living present; while to every prayer of humanity for liberty to improve its condition at its own expense and volition the vicar of Christ replies "*Non possumus.*" What might not Italy, the favorite of Nature, become if but one half the effort that is given to keeping her wretched and ignorant was bestowed in making her happy and enlightened!

The positive and negative misgovernment by church and state, to which she has been long subjected, can only be rightly understood by direct acquaintance with the people themselves. Since the party of action has undertaken to work out a more satisfactory civilization, instead of being chagrined by the shortcomings incidental to all new enterprise, I am astonished at the good done in so little time, and disposed to trust to the enthusiasm of a reawakened national life for further progress. Historical associations mingled with æsthetic enjoyment and delight in Italian scenery, not to speak of ecclesiastic and aristocratic beguilements, so veil the land with romance that the American mind, beyond all others, is disposed to overlook the chronic diseases which consume the population. The picturesque or polite may be a charitable masker; but often it is a cunning deceiver, making gay and lovely on the surface what is filth and ruin underneath.

To get the truth, our senses must be schooled to observe the disagreeable quite as much as the agreeable. Civilization requires its mean back door as well as stately front. Its first fruits should be that personal modesty and cleanliness which is ranked among the virtues next to godliness. When any clergy make religion to consist in outward show and dumb conformity, the inward graces have to shift for themselves. While the greatest pains have been taken in Italy to cause the people to worship the divinities of the new mythology and to pay "tithe and cummin," they have also been encouraged to act out their animal and emotional natures. If premiums had been offered for improvidence, untidiness, indolence, and shiftlessness, the results scarcely could have been worse. Habits, however disastrous to character and thrift, have passed unrebuked so long as

the people did not acquire the inconvenient one of thinking and working for themselves.

*The dark side of Italy.*

Italy is synonymous with beauty. But her loveliness is associated with unmentionable filth and blatant immodesty. No locality is too sacred, pleasant, or interesting to be spared defilement, unless under vigilant surveillance or *quasi* protected by the symbol of salvation, the most common use of which now is, to scare away by an appeal to their superstitions those dirty-minded wretches who are inaccessible to direct ideas of propriety. Even these crosses are not always able to fulfil their sanitary and beneficent purposes. The condition of public ways, ruins, and out-door sights in general prove that there is no public disapprobation of their defilement, nor of the wanton immodesty attending it, which puts human beings almost on the footing of animals as regards bodily habits. If the rulers and clergy had extended their toleration of the most offensive nuisances to eye and nose, equally to freedom of mind, these material evils, as in northern countries, would have been abated. But it has been a more congenial occupation to amuse the public with out-door fêtes, and get up tableaux and spectacles in churches, than to preach cleanliness of mind and body, purify the atmosphere, or elevate the moral and intellectual tone of the community. I doubt if it ever occurs to those who could reform the public manners that the present state of things is not wholesome and proper.

What also are we to think of their neglect of duty in view of the cruelty towards animals and pitiless massacre of the smallest birds? The brutality exercised on horses makes it painful to enter a public vehicle, the whips being the sole reliance of drivers, who either stare in stolid astonishment at any rebuke, or, momentarily acquiescing, politely hint that the reprover must be an eccentric fool.

Imagine the state of conscience where a mother in straitened circumstances, who has deprived herself of necessaries of life to educate an only son, after having secured him a petty clerkship, cheerfully consents, as a natural and proper act, to be unrecognized by her child in the street, lest her humble appearance should compromise him with his companions!

Where priestly control is absolute, there ignorance and superstition must abound. At Milicia, in Sicily, the peasantry are taught to believe that whenever the Madonna goes out in a procession, she has the power to stop before any house, and

refuse to move on until the inmates give her money. As for St. Anthony, he burns the cabin of any peasant who neglects to make him an offering on his *fête*, while the pious St. Francis soundly thrashes those who fail in their vows to him. On the other hand, the rural populations sometimes curse and imprison the Mother of God, when their crops fail. Even in comparatively enlightened Tuscany, at Montevarchi, a short distance from Florence, three drops of the milk of the Virgin are periodically exhibited, to be worshipped and to extort money. Some religious teachers declare baths to be immoral. Girls, by them, are forbidden to learn to write, lest they should correspond with those to whom they are betrothed or with whom they are in love. In a town not far from Naples, a Neapolitan assured me he could not find one inkstand. An intelligent Italian of good position, on being assured that what he was saying was not only untrue, but a stupid lie, naively replied, "O, you English have such a prejudice for truth!" In a certain district of Sicily and perhaps elsewhere, the deformed or maimed are viewed as cursed of God. A blind gentleman of remarkable musical talents, to which he owes his present independent position, born of a good family, says that he was thrust out of it when a child, without resources or instruction, while his sound brothers and sisters were reared in luxury. Whenever the maternal instinct prompted his mother to be kind to him, she always confessed it as a sin, and prayed for forgiveness.

Among the lowest classes, old women are apt to be considered as abominations. Instead of respect, age and sex too often incite jests and abuse; partly owing to the common dislike of physical decay and dread of death, and in part because of the inability of the victims to resent in kind. In points of æsthetic and natural beauty, Florence is the queen of cities. Her journals assert that the Italians are the most civilized of races. Yet there is a degree of cowardly malignity in some of its population which could scarcely obtain among savages. An elderly woman of irreproachable character, whom I have known for years in her humble but respectable avocation, on going recently to one of the popular theatres and seating herself in the cheaper places used indiscriminately by both sexes, was kicked on her legs and otherwise maltreated in a sly way, accompanied by obscene ridicule from the men about her, who immediately excused themselves like poltroons as soon as they ascertained that her grandson was at hand. If she had been an apparently un-

protected girl the attentions would have been different but not less insulting. There might be equal barbarism in a low Anglo-Saxon audience, but the spectators, instead of enjoying it or remaining quiet, would instinctively take the part of the weak; at all events insist on fair play.

I admit and admire the current "*gentilezza*" of Italian manners; still more the humility, respect for superiors, honesty, and general good deportment of some of the "old school" peasantry, trained in feudal habits. But this latter phase of character is fast disappearing, and the former diminishing. In itself it is only an æsthetic accomplishment, not necessarily reposing on any moral foundation. In citing facts I adhere to those whose evidence is incontestable and admitted by candid Italians themselves. They acknowledge that there is a higher standard of justice, truth, and manhood, in Protestant than in Catholic training, giving a conscience and independence to the one which is unknown and unmissed in the other. While this difference in moral education continues, the results on the national habits must be what they are. Indeed, radical defects of character and deficient intelligence seem not to be considered by the priesthood as within their province to remedy, but any shifting of the theological or political weathercock is watched with intense anxiety. A symptom of the generally low moral consciousness may be found in the application of the term for bad, *cattivo* — in its derivative meaning, *caught* or *found out*, not evil, as in English. A lie is popularly held to be the same as the truth until detected. The social and religious foundations of society being thus loose-jointed, it is not surprising that so much suspicion and hypocrisy come to the surface. Freethinking elsewhere is usually an honest conviction or doubt, and its possessors live up to their ideas. Not so in Italy. Among the better instructed there is slight belief in the actual dogmas of the Church. Yet it is rarely the case that the most daring skeptic in his last sickness does not reconcile himself to the priests. Even the excommunicated Cavour so far forgot the principles of his life, as to do so when dying. The reason is apparent. At present there are no profound spiritual convictions, or principles of duty to replace the worn-out ecclesiastical materialisms into which the offices of the Church have degenerated, and to dissipate the current superstitions with their concomitant fear. Nominal duties are fulfilled when an honorable place is given at home to sacred images, and a deference shown them in public.

Nowhere are crucifixes and madonnas more common than in haunts of vice, being viewed as talismans, to be reverenced or scoffed, according as they are believed to favor the nefarious pursuits of the inmates. Doubtless the Bible among the least enlightened Protestants has a sort of fétish value, but there is not a vicious person of any sect but would feel reproved by its presence, nor one who would admit it into any scheme of wickedness. Such is the turpitude of conscience of the lowest Italian class, that they demand the sanction of their idols, especially for brigandage, frequently proposing to share with them the results of their crimes. It is a class, too, over which alone the priesthood has influence. What, then, must have been the extent of their neglect of the primary obligations of their faith, where these things exist!

*Glamour of the Northern mind in regard to the Southern.*

Climate and art are mainly responsible for the glamour of the Northern mind in regard to the Southern. Probe its civilization, and its unsoundness appears at once, especially as regards woman. She is either a pet or a laboring animal, but an animal always. I generalize, of course, permitting every reader to note his own exceptions, as I do mine, but maintaining the soundness of the conclusion as a whole. The peasant husband gives his wife and daughters field labors as toilsome, often more so, than he takes for himself, while whatever they may earn independent of him, he disposes of. It is common to see the finer organized sex doing the labors of draft-cattle, or carrying heavy burdens, their male relatives meantime resting or playing games. Italian men are not unkind at heart, only thoughtless and selfish in these respects; a deportment generated from the lees of heathenism which the Church has never seriously set itself about cleansing. Even its charities are sometimes so administered as to pervert the moral instinct. Convenient foundling asylums tempt parents who are not indigent or criminal to abandon their offspring in their tender years, to be eventually reclaimed if it be desirable; if not, left to destiny. What that often is, may be conjectured from the soubriquet of Herod the Great, given to a superintendent of the principal institution of this nature in one of the chief cities.

So-called gallantry may gild the manners of the men of the higher classes toward women, but this specious devotion comes from and is directed towards the animal in both. There is an untranslatable freedom of expression in society, connected with

elegant manners, which betokens a lack of moral sensitiveness. Journals of repute publish tales or *feuilletons* in series, which can scarcely be excelled in grossness of sensualism, direct and indirect, and would not be tolerated in English or American families. There is, too, a latitude in the use of religious terms that grates upon Protestant ears, but which the euphony of the language so mitigates or covers up after the first surprise; the ear delighting in what the moral sense would reject. Piazza Santo Spirito or Via dall' Inferno, sound differently from Holy Ghost Square or Hell Street, independent of associations; but an Anglo-Saxon would hesitate at such a use of words, embodying the most profound mysteries of his creed. In fact, Northern and Southern ideas of decency and propriety vary as much as the climates: the one being based more on the moral, and the other on a conventional sense. At heart, the "*jeunesse dorée*" of all countries are much alike, but I believe they have yet in America or England to accustom themselves in their orgies to be waited on by naked girls; or that any fashionable coterie of those countries, *fast* as their fastest women may be in their manners, would dare, as has been done in Italy, to give a ball at which complete nudity, with the exception of a mask to the face, was the condition of admittance. I have heard such an one described by a high-bred lady, as a novel and interesting affair. The "cancan" too, is sometimes danced by a select circle of aristocratic amateurs.

But the low status of women in the eyes of the men is often manifested in the public streets by the middle classes, who are guiltless of the vices of the aristocracy, and mean well, but are so obtuse as not to be conscious of their rudeness. They evidently are brought up to consider that a woman alone has no rights a man is bound to respect. I have seen an American lady rudely forced, by a well-dressed man, to take the outside, as a carriage was rapidly passing in a crowded, narrow thoroughfare, by which she had a very narrow escape from being run over, and the only excitement it created was an oath from the driver, and astonishment from her assailant, that any woman should dare to be in their way.

On another occasion, while raining, a lady tried to pass a man lazily seated in a doorway, with his limbs occupying the sidewalk. To avoid soiling herself in the gutter, she pushed gently by him. He screamed after her such obscene abuse, as would have caused him to have been lynched in America, wind-

ing up with, "if she was his mistress, she would not have dared take such a liberty with him."

There is also the well-known numerous class of men, young and old, who dog women that have the courage to go out by themselves on any errand, sometimes from sheer lewdness, but often out of puerile mischief, ejaculating silly compliments, or hissing foulness in their ears.

These and similar traits, which every traveller may witness, evince the low estimation in which woman is still held in Italy, and sometimes cause the Anglo-Saxon mind to come into indignant collision with the Latin, to its surprise, because of the different moral view, or want of one, peculiar to it. Neither fine art nor a lovely climate compensates for this social condition. And there can be no improvement unless young Italy learns that woman has something else in her nature besides the animal. How hopeless any immediate change for the better seems to the best youth, can be known only on discussion with them. Even when admitting the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon training, they declare they would not trust their own sisters or wives with the slightest liberty. The domestic system is one of exclusion, seclusion, and repression; stagnating to the mind, but stimulating to desire and imagination, with degrading consequences to both sexes, and all the worse because of the want of those intellectual resources, which largely obtain throughout England, Germany, and America. The notions that still govern the domestic status of the women of Latin races, are largely infiltrated with Oriental ideas of isolation and indifference to mental development.

Every observant traveller notes the vacant stare, and apparent mental impotency of the multitude of aged persons of both sexes, especially in Florence; a stolidity of brain caused by the prevailing disuse of the intellectual functions. The mind actually shrivels from lack of wholesome exercise.

Southern races are more temperate and tractable than Northern. Their vices are more insidious and wide-spread, but their deportment in general less violent and brutal. Civilization has had them longer in hand. Roman Catholicism having shown its indisposition to reform and educate, we should rejoice in the progress of the popular reaction, even if its first aspect is seemingly hostile to the state religion. When criminal, it deserves harsher treatment than even political misgovernment, because of its spiritual power and assumptions. In the towns

its influence is more shaken than in the country. I have been in a great church in one of the chief cities during the festival of the patron saint, and despite fine music and decorations found only five worshippers, where five thousand would have found space. Paganism lingered long in the rural districts, dying so imperceptibly that the peasants to this day do not know what true Christianity requires of them. "*Pagus*," the verbal parent of pagan and paganism, meant a village, which was their last haunt. Just as paganism died out, longer lived in the fields than the streets, so will the papal worship, before the newer interpretations of Christianity, initiated by Protestantism, and more practically applied to human welfare.

"*A pagus.*"

A sketch of a nineteenth century *pagus*, one of the many thousands of the direct descendants of those of paganism, which are to be seen throughout Italy and Sicily, will show how the bulk of their peasantry still live. Take, for instance, one of the petty hill-towns in the old province of Lucca, which overhang the Baths. Here the population has ever been devoted to the Church, and owing to the numerous summer visitors, seen somewhat of foreign life, had a ready market for their labor and crops, and is exceptionally genial, simple, and industrious. No country can show better raw-stuff for civilization. The Italian peasant often possesses a fine mental grain and rare susceptibility of refinement. How far the "healing of nations," as administered by the priesthood, has elevated their material and intellectual condition above that of their pagan ancestry, we may gain some idea from present facts, which do not vary substantially from the old, while one village is pretty much a type of all, though the poverty and misery of many have reached their lowest stage. Guliana, called after Julius Cæsar, is a better specimen than common; the triple Controni one of the worst.

The approach is by steep foot-paths, winding among vineyards, olive groves, chestnut and oak forests, over hill-sides, broken and tossed into romantic wildness, every step offering a fresh view, and turning fatigue into exhilaration with each breath of mountain air. Goats beloved of Pan, donkeys of Bacchus, grape-laden peasants, lithe maidens in scant drapery, with antique water-jars poised on their heads, venting their light-heartedness in wild cries, and their heavily laden mothers, sad and silent, but ever prompt with a courteous greeting for the stranger, make a novel spectacle for an American. Near

and distant bells of feudal church-towers call to each other, now in exulting cadence from high crags, sending their silvery notes through the sun-setting air, then dying softly away in shadowy valleys into melodious whispers, as if guardian spirits were bidding mortals good-night, before mounting to heaven. Soon we reach heights overspread with an atmosphere of dissolved opal. Thence appear ridge behind ridge of mountains in softened purple outline against a golden horizon, retreating into the mysterious depths of the Apennines, as waves after a storm subside into long, lazy swells, broken at intervals by one that frets its indignant foam into cataracts of color against the rebuking sky.

*The nature of the picturesque.*

Before this spectacle, the visitor who comes only to find the picturesque, will scarcely turn aside to look at its reverse. My theme demands both views. Here the picturesque being twin of wretchedness, the æsthetic faculty is gratified while the moral sense makes its practical investigations. I fear that ruin or decay of human work and life, as opposed to comfort and progress, is the essential element of the picturesque. Nature puts on this æsthetic disguise, to reconcile us to her rudely rapid growth or quiescent, long-breathed revolutions. Antique and mediæval art had no objective recognition of it, for their idealisms were of human and superhuman types. By no elasticity of imagination can we make man himself, apart from his background of Nature, into a picturesque object. The imperious individuality of his living presence eliminates its spirit from art. Picturesqueness is a modern æsthetic discovery, that comes from a descent of the mind in its standard of appreciation rather than a rise. The antique ideal was the superhuman beautiful. The mediæval ideal was the supernatural human; in one case man was made a god, in the other God was made man, each yielding a sublime creative art. Renaissance transformed the sensuous loveliness of the former and the spiritual beauty of the latter into a bestial ideal; or a direct confession of sensualism as the foothold of man's faith. There could be no picturesqueness in this any more, indeed even less, than in the others, for wantonness is a lewd ape, and detests alike the spiritual sublime and the natural comely.

Ancient science was speculative, just as antique art was imaginative. Modern science plants itself on rationalism, drawing art after it into the simple phase of observation. Mark

how distinct their life essences are! Briefly, modern art being more versatile and diversified in its taste, fonder of what is ambiguously termed nature, adheres to a lower range of motives and treats them either in a picturesque or realistic manner, contented to be pretty or true. Hence its tendency is to lower man as an art motive, just as antiquity was prone to the opposite. What man for the moment loses, nature gains. The new field of taste is both attractive and wholesome, but it should not cause indifference to the real welfare of our species. Picturesqueness then becomes a siren beguiling art into a theory of *dilettante* excitements and technical appreciations, disennobling to character and belittling to the fancy. For this reason I put the love of the picturesque into its proper secondary position as regards art, and as an antidote to my own disposition to overregard it, introduce a *pagus* to my readers.

Imagine a few score rude stone hovels huddled together, after the universal air and light excluding patterns of the old cities, only more shrunken, grimy, and weather-racked, low-studded, heavy-roofed, few or no panes of glass, the stone stairs mostly on the outside; rooms small, dark, and bat-like; blackened rafters and tiles overhead, and underneath dilapidated stone floors; piggeries, henneries, stables, and human slum, all mixed up and in common use; put rows of these habitations on sharp hill-sides, grown like lichens to the rock, and forming lanes or tiny squares so close that only a mid-day sun can lighten their recesses, each a den of dirt and penury, or if there be any of better outside, comfort in the interior does not match it; add the reeking filth of an unwashed population, where water is often far-fetched and hard to get; a perennial diet of sour wine, black bread, green oil, coarse beans and salads, often scanty at that; find as the centres of this village life, a *café* which is an air-tight chillsome cell, containing a few bottles, tumblers, and the omnipresent tobacco, pipes, salt, and postage stamps of governmental monopoly; a clean patched up church may be on the site, and heir to the remains of a heathen temple, or, as at Asissi, the old temple itself, with its primitive altar of sacrifice still to be seen by descending a few feet beneath the level of the present piazza, showing that one has not to scratch deep anywhere in papal soil to disinter paganism; a church that fits æsthetically well into the material degradation around it, limiting its spiritual gifts to its venerable routine of festivals and masses, but keeping alive, in the stunted human heart, a divine spark which other-

wise might entirely go out in the intellectual darkness that comes of complete isolation from the world at large; a literature limited to church-prayers, marvels of saints, an almanac, and sometimes one Lilliputian newspaper from the nearest city; a people of whom the old are prematurely woe-begone and decrepit, body and mind worked and starved to the verge of extinction; the young with their parents' hardships for their sole inheritance; life for all a horrid enchantment of profitless, ill fed, badly sheltered toil; death only presenting a ghastly hope of betterment, provided the ecclesiastical power that broods with raven-wings over this desolation be propitiated to say God speed: combine all this into one picture and it will be an average sample of the last strongholds of the papacy in Italy, made the more pitiable by its exquisite setting of the handiwork of God. Pan is verily dead, and Christ has not risen here.

May not the picturesque cost humanity too much? There is none in a Yankee or his home. Instead, angularity and thrift abound. He and his comfort are as much the fruit of two centuries of Puritan culture as the Italian peasant and his destitution are the sum total of papal gestation after fifteen. The Yankee is not yet the ideal man of humanity; far from it. He lacks æsthetic roundness and juiciness. Breadth, expansion, the gracious refinement of true taste, amenity of manners, and comprehension of the right place and object of the beautiful in civilization, come slow and hard to him; for his ancestors were too recently Teutonic or Saxon barbarians, while his own exigencies of existence have been of necessity desperately utilitarian and homely. Besides, his actual civilization only began after the Reformation had put art under a dogmatic ban, and made him suspicious of it altogether. Wisely, it has happened to him that first he was led to improve himself morally and materially. Having secured his political and personal independence, made an orderly and comfortable home, built his school and meeting-houses, lecture-rooms, music-halls, and libraries, connected his village by railway and telegraph with the whole world, subscribed for his literary magazine and news journal, abolished slavery in man and put steam to do his hardest labor, provided for his general well-being and secured his income, let us hope he will now begin to give over his one-sided intensity of intellectual training and look about for means to make his life more spiritually productive and æsthetically happy. His two centuries of axe and school work are a sound investment. Fifteen

centuries' misrule have left his Italian brother a beggar as to the first necessaries of civilization, incapacitated him from rightly enjoying what Nature has so generously given him gratis, and of comprehending and rightly directing the fine æsthetic temperament native to his race. Such has been the delinquency of his church as regards his education, that at last the civil power has been compelled both to undo what it has done, and to do what it has left undone, so that his welfare now rests more upon the action of the state than his religious instructors. It has turned convents into barracks, schools, asylums, hospitals, and museums; compelled idle and vagrant nuns and monks to become normal men and women; broken up many sources of beggary and superstition, and finally by the intervention of the drill-sergeant given to the village clowns their first lessons in manliness, neatness, sanitary discipline, general intelligence. As the soldier proves to be a better schoolmaster than the priest, it is not surprising that the Church is losing its influence even over the masses, while intelligent men are hopeless of any reform within itself. *Non possumus* cuts two ways at once.

*What the Christian idea has accomplished.*

Although the priests have left so much undone, Christianity itself has not been quite inert. A moral upheaval has been going on since the Crucifixion. The outlook of humanity is different. Certain old rites and virtues are now called vices and indecencies. It is not considered right to plunder or enslave a man because he speaks another language, or lives on the further side of a river or mountain; although the custom is still rife among Tuscan bumpkins of different villages of waylaying one another when they go a-wooing, and either savagely beating or bedaubing with human ordure from head to foot the unfortunate swain whose amorous courage has prompted him to risk the penalty of courting a lass of a rival hamlet. As this filthy persecution ends at marriage, the lover makes haste to transform the sweetheart into his wife. Roman priests may do silly and imbecile things, but they would not now be upheld by public sentiment, as in the antique Lupercals, in running races naked through the streets, and striking those they met with whips of goatskin, the blows of which were received with great unction by married women because supposed to promote fertility. Even in the third century A. C., human sacrifices were continued on the Albine Mount to the Latian Jupiter. In modern times the Roman Catholic Church has felt obligated to veil its blood-offerings by dogmatic chicanery and inquis-

itorial offices. The riotous rites of Cybele, "Virgin Mother of the God," with their processions of "miserable buffoons," as St. Augustine calls them, chanting indecent verses before her image, are now succeeded by the chaster though not less idolatrous worship of the Madonna. In fine there has been some moral progress, but not enough to save Romanism from the fate of the unfaithful steward.

*The dethronement of papacy.*

I have personal cause of sympathy in its approaching dethronement, as will be seen in the narration of sundry experiences, and reasons for deprecating any sudden violence to the feelings of the rural population. If the papal, like the pagan worship, is abruptly destroyed, before a superior system of religious instruction is rooted in the convictions of the people, they will be left in utter æsthetic and mental destitution. The peasant would lose the slight hold that he has on civilization, and be reduced in his hopes and pleasures to the level of his cattle. His theatre, music-hall, and school-room are still centred in the Church, which provides his only entertainments while living and consolation in dying. Defective as is its practical training, it preserves precious germs of religion and morality. But there can be no enlightened, patriotic clergymen where the public opinion is not sufficiently instructed to be a judge of their qualifications and a stimulus to their intellectual progress. A country priest in Italy may be well-intentioned and of average culture, but he must be more than human, if his isolation, deprivation of family ties, dull routine of rites and neglect of preaching, do not in time cause a decline of his moral and intellectual state almost to the surrounding level.

In America a clergyman is exercised to keep up with the mental requirements of his congregation. If he fall behind, sometimes if he get too far ahead, he is exchanged for another. Our competitive brain attrition compels the clergy either to face the living age about them, or to drop behind into the oblivion of effete ideas. Here, on the contrary, their discipline and training force the priests to turn their backs on the present. They live in perpetual contradiction to its spirit and needs, as a distinct class, owing allegiance to a hostile court, disclaiming responsibility to their own feeders, and inclined by unwise vows to sexual relations that have given rise to the common saying, "as bad as a priest." The falsities they are required to invent and proclaim, are enough in themselves to stultify the mind. A healthful action of brain and body becomes equally as impossible as

a congenial association of ideas and interests with modern progress.

The original sin of this wrong practice and position is not to be laid to the charge of the inferior clergy. They are conscripted to do the work of their ecclesiastical lords. The evil has passed so thoroughly into all phases of society that improvement has become hopeless except by radical changes of religious and æsthetic instruction. What the present system is I will show by citing one of those periodical pageants, to be seen in their primitive idolatry only among the peasantry. The scene occurred in a hill-town on the outskirts of the Tuscan Maremma. Its motive was a miraculous crucifix of hideous aspect which was believed to heal diseases, and perform other acts much to the credit of the priests who owned it. But so sacred was it considered that it was exposed in public procession only once in seventeen years, or on occasions of calamity, when its supernatural power was a last resource of superstition. Its *fête* was the most important event that could happen to the neighborhood. Bands of music were sent for, fireworks provided, booths erected, and a regular trading, feasting, and religious jubilee prepared. Men, women, and children in their gala attire came from all the country round, beggars to forego for a brief holiday their monotonous whine, cripples to be healed, and all to accept the proffered "indulgences." The crowd followed in procession, or kneeled in the hot, dusty road, strewn with green leaves and flowers, along which the image was borne under a gaudy canopy surrounded by lighted candles, held by richly robed priests chanting and swinging censers, and the usual mob of laymen and dirty boys greedy after the wax-drippings, all tumultuous with anticipated enjoyment. In Rome and cities in general, spectacles of this sort are mainly shows to attract strangers and amuse the populace. Here however there was a deep undercurrent of fanatical enthusiasm. Although standing respectfully apart from the crowd, a stranger was savagely reproved for not joining in the homage to their idol. In the lively pleasuring that ensued after the religious functions were finished, there were no drunken excesses or disturbances. The entire population had given itself over to the Church to be amused and edified as it thought expedient for them. Their plan was not calculated to enlighten their understanding, or to make the people more self-reliant. But it marked a bright spot in their impoverished lives, and stirred anew their sluggish emotions.

Would it be wise to forcibly deprive them even of such entertainment before they had acquired an insight into something of a more salutary character?[1]

*Duomo of Cortona.*

Is it simply a desire to oblige, or a growing indifference to their own rites, that makes the subordinates in many Italian churches so amiable to visitors?

Going into the Duomo of Cortona, one Sunday morning, to keep an appointment with the sacristan to see the Signorellis, I found high mass going on in presence of a numerous auditory. As I was turning back, the sacristan perceived me, and insisted on my seeing the paintings. It was necessary to pass through the entire congregation and by the priests at the altar, which I was reluctant to do, especially with a party. But wishing to test to what extent sight-seeing under such circumstances would be *not seen* by the clergy and their flock, we followed our guide and were unnoticed except by an occasional furtive glance. Strangers are rare in Cortona; but the magnetism of politeness and devotion combined, caused a sobriety of deportment which would not be looked for in any Protestant meeting-house if anything equally novel should occur to excite the attention of its pew-pent members. We were speedily made to feel that we could go on with our business as freely as the priests with theirs. To better inspect the principal picture, the sacristan told us to climb the rear of the high altar, amid the candlesticks and sacred ornaments, mass going on meanwhile in front. This looked so much like abusing our privileges that we declined; but he set the example, and made a path for us. We enjoyed our position without receiving one reproving glance or being noticed in any way.

On another occasion, to avoid intrusion, I went early to the Church of St. Francis at Arezzo, to study the frescoes of Piero

[1] Notwithstanding his firm habits of devotion, the common Italian at times will play pranks with church-rites such as Protestant levity would never devise against anything held sacred. Not long since there was to be a grand festival in one of the minor seaports, ending in a procession of chanting monks, music, candles, and images, got up with all possible splendor and solemnity, but preceded by a feast which the populace were admitted to view as the dishes were placed on the tables. A wag among them slyly dropped a large dose of jalap into the soup, which was consumed in due time. As the reader may surmise, after the procession had started on its long round, there were exhibited by its tonsured and robed members a series of impromptu and involuntary spectacles wholly uncanonical, to the astonishment and diversion of the crowd. The sufferers charitably attributed their abdominal distress to the use of copper vessels not properly tinned.

della Francesca in the choir. But the friars soon began to enter, and pray close to me. As I started to go, they begged me not to mind them, but to consult my own convenience, offering sundry explanations of the subjects, of which, however, they knew but little, and could appreciate artistically still less. The invitation was so sincerely given that I stayed in their midst while they went on with the regular services for which they had collected. I must not forget to add that they also adjusted the light to the best advantage for me; and the next moment, absorbed in their devotions, no more heeded my presence than if I had been one of the painted figures on the wall. In the main nave I had met the day before a young priest as handsome as an angel, sweeping the pavement. Attracted by his intelligent expression, I entered into conversation with him on matters of art. Leaning on his broom-handle with unconscious grace and dignity, his remarks caused me to respect his taste as much as the high-toned humility, which made his lowly task seem spiritually great.

Here there is an odious contrast to draw to the disadvantage of our English relations. Once, being near Westminster as a storm was bursting over London, I sought refuge in the Abbey. The sudden transition from the tempest without to the peace within made it seem like the holy rest saints pray for. Morning service was dying out in solemn tones of organ. The angry thunder, pacified by its passage through the fretted stone roof, fell on the ear with harmonious cadence, and spent itself in low whispers amid the silent monuments, while the sharp lightning, as it leaped from out the cloud-glooms, pierced the stained windows with intensified glory. Never had I so completely realized the worth of the true Gothic as a shelter from the world, and a balm for the troubled soul. My gratitude went then and there freely up to those who had bestowed on man so precious a gift; their souls, I trusted, were realizing in the perfect mansions of our common Father the fulness of that spiritual gladness of which their labors below are a faint type.

Seeking to enter the Edward VIIth Chapel, as usual I was confronted by an iron gate and a stout verger, who, like a jailer speaking to a convict, told me to wait while a crowd collected and paid their fees in advance, and then he would show us through. Former experiences of the boors of his class scampering their sixpenny victims through a spectacle which can only be enjoyed by contemplation at leisure, had so disgusted me

that I had invariably left, cursing the British supineness which permitted their finest ecclesiastical edifice to be a mockery instead of an edification to the public, as its rare monuments are called off in rapid cockney speech, like the names and habits of caged beasts by a vulgar showman. Indeed, I had had hasty words with my wife for suggesting to me again to undergo this æsthetic outrage. I remember indignantly saying that it was countenancing a direct robbery of the American and English public, whose ancestors had bequeathed this monument for our free edification, and that it effectually barred our seeing and understanding what we paid to see and understand. However, we tried it once more, in a crowd of pushing children and women struggling to be foremost, and get out soonest, for which I did not blame them. After our keeper had counted us and then his sixpences to see that they agreed, he began in the most offensive manner to race us through in the "going, going, gone" habit of speech of an auctioneer, sharply rebuking any who lingered to see what he was talking about, scolding the children, apparently terribly agitated lest some one should read an inscription or look at anything but his swelling person, as in a pompous madhouse style he murdered the Queen's English, history, and art all at once. So rapid was he that he overtook the party that had preceded ours, and we had the benefit of his brother verger's jargon mingled with his. One blunt Englishman showed fight, and told him, as he was paid for it, he must behave with more decency. As for ourselves, we got out as soon as we could, vowing more indignantly than ever not again to enter the chapel unless the verger nuisance was abated. Guides elsewhere may be as greedy, but never as brutal as him of the Abbey. Why cannot the Chapter charge a shilling entrance, and permit the visitors to examine their museum without being badgered by their flunkeys into an unchristian state of mind. Is it that their system is so uniquely bad that they take pride in making it a "vested right?"

How different are the rencounters in Italy! Discovering genuine men concealed in cowls begets a romantic sympathy for their orders. Exploring lately the suppressed Convent of Monte Uliveto, near Florence, I chanced upon its last Benedictine occupant, left as the temporary guardian of its forlornness. He was a cultivated, comely, clean monk of aristocratic bearing and sensuous temperament. As he talked about his speedy return to family life, art, and politics, I detected in the

lurking satire of a bright, sagacious eye that which would soon reconcile him to worldly cares and ambition. Taking me out of the mysterious darkness of the convent into the declining sunlight, which revealed the city as in a golden flame shooting skyward against a background of purple hills, he seemed like the genius of fresh, young Italy, casting behind him the dead past to rejoice in the vital present. Guides like the courteous Benedictine and the more spiritual monk of St. Francesco are not to be bought with dirty sixpences. Indeed, to hint at a recompense for their politeness is only to invite mortification for want of perception.

There is, however, a class of church lazzaroni who do try the temper and purse of the visitor. I confess to pitying them after coming to know something of their abject lot. Cease, friends, to grudge their importunity the small pittance that makes them happier for meeting you. They clean the rich pavements you walk over, and dust your favorite pictures. Two types I have in mind, one of Arezzo, the other of Siena, no matter what church, for the poor are ever about us. Both were absolute hags in outward appearance. The former installed herself as my body-guard against the rest of beggardom, and facilitated inspection of the monuments, besides letting me behind the scenes of her life. Her golden days had been spent in the service of Perugino in his native Citta della Pieve, when it was the fashion to admire him. Visitors and coppers were plentiful. But the taste of tourists finally got surfeited on that form of preraphaelite diet, and she was obliged to change her quarters for those of some other artist more in request. For her sins she had hit on Arezzo, where she was now worse off than ever. But her patience and hope were inexhaustible, while her contentment was a lesson to me.

A stranger in Italy must submit to beggary of all degrees of genuineness and imposition, as an unavoidable element of the picturesque. It is best to turn it to advantage, since it cannot be repressed. The mendicants that herd in the Piazza of the Duomo at Pisa are perversely obtrusive, but not without a sense of honor. Before entering the cathedral, I assembled them, and asked how much they would demand not to speak to me again that day. After some consultation, they named a sum which gave each less than one cent. I paid it and they held scrupulously to their bargain, much to my comfort as I saw their importunate exhibition of rags and sores to others.

My Siena friend let me into a secret as regards church-pay worth all the sympathy she extracted. She had attached herself to Razzi's picturesque Epiphany, with its Joseph jealously scowling at the youngest of the kings, who is more ardently admiring the mother than the infant, a magnificent painting, the drawing of whose curtain ought to relieve any one in pitiable circumstances. But, alas, it does not! As she phrased it, for breaking her back and scrubbing her scant flesh down to the bones in keeping the church clean, and moving about the heavy "*roba*" for the frequent festivals, she received an annual salary of exactly three dollars and sixty cents, four dinners of meat and wine, and a bread-and-water diet the remainder of the time. On this and Razzi she lived, but her receipts from him had to be divided with a superior *custode*, who watched her so closely that she dared not except a single centime for herself exclusively. Her patched garments, coeval with her first womanhood, would have made excellent relics of the holiest of the female anchorites. All the men that she knew, she detested; the priests because of her salary, the *custode* for filching her gains, and her husband for threatening to kill her if she left her present position in uncertain quest of a better. Her sole love was a cat who shared her bread and water, watched the picture and her visitors, and was rewarded by torrents of kisses from a withered mouth, which it bore with resignation, as philosophers submit to fate. She reckoned it a happy event that after waiting months in vain for strangers to call upon her "old master," on that day and the one before several had come. There was an excusable bitterness in her estimate of life, as she eat her meagre dinner sitting on the chilling marble floor, embracing her cat in the intervals of her conversation.

*Hermitage of Gallicano.*

If my reader wishes an agreeable flavor of mediæval monasticism to abide permanently in his mind, like that of a rich old wine on his palate, let him go to the Hermitage of Gallicano, twelve carriage and three pedestrian miles from the Baths of Lucca, following the valley of the Serchio. The walking part of the trip is up a picturesque valley. We enter it where the romantic old town of Gallicano rises abruptly on either side of the narrow gorge through which flows the stream that comes down the hills, divided into fertilizing rills, and giving to the vegetation an almost tropical luxuriance of green. About half-way up the Apennines, whose backbone here crests the Mediterranean, and grows into one with the white Carrara

mountains, we come suddenly upon the Hermitage, clinging to the hollow of an overhanging precipice, fringed with forest trees, and ferns that droop over its extreme verge. So slight is the apparent foothold, we marvel how it hangs there, and by what way to approach it. But in advancing, the path discloses itself until the outer gate is reached, where streams of crystal water, too cold to drink suddenly, gush from the rock out of which the Hermitage for the most part is excavated. The narrow, sloping ledge on which it stands, formed by fallen débris, seems scarcely sufficient to sustain the antique Romanesque façade, forming a two-storied corridor and bell-tower, which lean or brace themselves against the precipice, to prevent sliding bodily down the hill. Solid structures, however, make the architecture secure, though so steep and sudden is the descent, broken at first by a series of stone terraces, upholding patches of cultivated soil, that a visitor, seated in the upper corridor, seems like a bird in a cage hung against a high wall midway between ground and sky; projecting eaves keeping it in dark shadow, while far beneath lie the sunlight, waters, flowers, and fruits it pines to reach. The sensation is peculiarly novel, for the view commands a variety of the grand and beautiful, under local conditions so startling as all but to mingle fear with pleasure. At first sight of the immense mass of rock, split and fractured by former catastrophes of nature, rising concavely hundreds of feet above, and projecting over the building, and the steep gulf that descends for fifteen hundred feet directly beneath, so that a mere foot wall alone prevents the visitor from seeing the first descent of the ground, one may plead guilty to nervous apprehension. Soon, however, the strangeness of the spectacle, coupled with the thought that for more than eight centuries hermits have lived here in friendship with the formidable mountain — indeed protected, warmed, fed, and sheltered by it — tranquillizes the mind to a degree that makes it begin to envy them their lot. No repulsive asceticism is seen hereabouts. Theirs was the sylvan picturesqueness of anchoret life. They were placid Christian satyrs, vegetarians, praying as their antique prototype piped, working as he danced, but, like him, appreciative amateurs of an equable climate, delicious groves, fountains, and whatever makes the landscape agreeable. There were no noxious animals or reptiles to molest them. A more agreeable outlook on the external world, none might pine for. On the farther side of the Serchio rose the Lucca Apennines, crowned with forests, villas,

and feudal towns, the most prominent of which, Bari, was distinctly in sight on its verdant mountain site, with its white walls and grand old Lombard Duomo glistening in the sun like a diamond set in emeralds. In front were high peaks and ravines of a semi-alpine character. By ascending their own mountain to the pass that led westward, these hermits could see much of the glory of the earth and the kingdoms thereof. A semicircle of snow-tipped mountains spreads itself right and left, until lost in the distant horizon, or sunk in the sea which washes the sands from the Gulf of Spezzia to the towers of Livorno. Between the Mediterranean and the spectator lie the scattered fragments of once hostile duchies, fertile in olives, vines, and grain, still bristling with the grim defences of more barbarous days. All this and more glory the shabby hermits were heir to, but I doubt if they ever gave it a moment's consideration; for to recognize nature understandingly, requires an æsthetic sense and spiritual discernment that anchorites, pedants, or mere worldlings are not apt to possess. Doubtless, our shorn and girdled ascetic found an infinite satisfaction in his laboriously built terraces, with their few inches of uncertain soil which bore him the fruit and vegetables he liked. They were now bright with flowers and oranges, arranged in a tiny parterre, after the formal Italian manner, but very welcome in color for the brilliant contrast they offered to the gray sternness of the precipice. A lank fig-tree, bearing a solitary fruit, had forced its way into the air out of the smutty crevice which served as the chimney to the kitchen. Its shrivelled, soot-covered trunk was pointed out as a sort of vegetable miracle protected from the fire, and nourished by the odor of sanctity that clove to the spot, despite its secularization. The edifice itself grew sympathetically out of the rock. Its chapels and dormitories were light and clean, if not cheerful. The young canon who hospitably entertained us, said that one aged hermit was left; but as he was then in the forest gathering fuel, we did not see him. Our canon's rock-cell had a piano, plenty of orthodox books, and sundry mild works of art, all quite unanchorite in aspect. There were plainer chambers for visitors, beside an unalluring woman to wait on them. We ate our picnic dinner in the upper corridor, in the open air, cordially approving of this hermitage if no other.

But the ascetic fruit of mediæval mysticism, and religious feeling, both good and bad, is fast being swept aside by nine-

teenth century utilitarianism. Such objects of art as can be removed, are being gathered into local museums, or pass into the hands of amateurs and dealers. What was once holy is now simply beautiful or curious. In brief, Roman Catholic religious art is rapidly finding itself on the same intellectual level as the antique, and as irrevocably passing away. Soon there will be very little of it to be seen in its original condition and localities. I do not regret this any more than I do the dying out of classical art, for while it held the minds of men in the thraldom of fear, there was no opening for better influences. It should be scrupulously preserved, when possible, intact, for its historical and æsthetic worth. As the world now stands — thanks to the service Christian art has done — on a higher basis of humanity than it did when it superseded the art of antiquity, we will not have to regret its ruthless devastation and destruction, as was the case with its pagan ancestor. Besides, the religious disquiet which has come over the world at this juncture is more a regular development of mind than the fruit of revolutionary desires. Ideas and acts having a certain freedom of expansion are less inclined to be convulsively destructive. Attilas, Genserics, Iconoclasts, Anabaptists, Robespierres, and St. Justs, are less and less likely to be repeated. The old is better able to make good terms with the new; but those terms have all one common refrain: Stand aside for your successor, peaceably if you will, forcibly if we must.

*Transformation, not obliteration.*

Transformation, however, and not obliteration, is the governing desire. Grand old monuments, that have done service to men in their time, like the Benedictine convent of Monte Cassino, too remote from active civilization to be beneficially utilized, will remain as landmarks in history as long as their walls hold together. Few of the multitude that fly past them on express trains, give an intelligent glance at their sites. Railroads have no sympathy with the picturesque and heroic. Their shrill pipings are for crowded thoroughfares. Will they ever be raised to a higher office than that of carriers of human merchandise, racing against time? Our epoch is one of rapid transitions. Antiquity has wholly disappeared. Mediævalism is gasping its last. The Renaissance has gone corrupt and inane. Modernism has not yet found for itself satisfactory shapes. In its innovations it is inflexibly practical. What these seem to be tending to in art, we will see in the review of other countries. Italy has opened no future in this

direction. She scarcely realizes that her old schools died with the decay of those religious and aristocratic influences that evoked their existence. She sees, however, that at present her energies must be given to the solution of problems of more vital importance. Those who heretofore guided her destinies were so eager to get God worshipped by lip and eye service that they forgot the essential matters of human welfare. This error has now to be corrected. Its civilization has to be taught to go alone, and be self-sustaining in the people themselves.

But church and state have been so long in selfish copartnership, for mutual benefit, that the latter cannot at once throw aside all her pernicious habits. It still believes in substituting one favored class interest for another; in breeding intellectual and artistic to take the places of the monastic idlers. For what else is the numerous body of professors who obtain their positions by favoritism, and are paid by the state for a lax system of lecturing that has slight reference to the actual needs and conditions of the people? There are about one thousand who receive salaries and emoluments varying from twenty-five hundred to ten thousand francs, in return for which they are supposed to instruct the pupils of the universities, and the public at large, by one or more short weekly lectures in philology, philosophy, poetry, fine arts, history, and the sciences. So far as general education is concerned, the system is a delusion, and in practice, an empty pretence of earning the stipends and securing the retiring pensions. Some professors are actuated by an honorable ambition. But the practical result is to inspire young men who have acquired distinction among their friends in any branch of learning with the notion that they have a claim on the state for support. This secured, the next ambition is to arrive at the highest grade of salary with the least possible labor. A conscientious professor may give all the lectures required by the university rules, but an indolent one may shirk them, I am told, with impunity. A professor in Italy is, in fact, a member of a privileged caste, supported at the expense of the bulk of tax-payers, with his time virtually at his own disposal, but indulged in the notion that he is of some special importance to the community which honors learning in supporting him. The real fact is that there is more of healthful future life for the state in the irrepressible street *gamin*, who has just begun to appear, than in him. His active self-reliance rebukes the egotistical dilettanteism of a professor, who has neither taste

*The Professors of Italy as a caste.*

for popular audiences nor capacity to create them. The hours of his lectures are an actual prohibition to any but those of fashionable leisure. If they were not, the choice and treatment of his topics, and his formal manner of reading, would not suit any people. An English or American lecturer consults the needs and tastes of the public, with mutual benefit. The standard of these countries has been as much raised by their systems of voluntary lecturing, as has the moral and religious standard of America by a free church. Yet both systems are only in their infancy. English and American audiences are numbered by thousands, who pay of their own accord to a favorite lecturer, as much for a single evening's instruction, as the Italian receives from the government for several months' nominal work. In Italy, where the lectures are free, a professor is considered as very erudite and popular, if in Florence he can attract an average attendance of one hundred persons, one half of whom will be foreigners, who go for a lesson in the language, while a large proportion of the remainder are personal friends, who attend out of "*gentilezza.*" Instead of promoting education, by letting knowledge make its own market, the government hinders it, by imitating the church, in adhering to a system which has nothing in common with the exigencies of the times or sympathies of the people.

*Old ideas — New saints.*

Old ideas and old saints were good in their day, and their strength lay in this fact. But time has left most of them so far behind that barren words are all that is now left of them. These cannot longer govern or content mankind. Fresh thoughts and heroes, saints of a new order, that of humanity interpreted in the broad Christian sense of fraternal love, ousting dogmatic exclusivism and elected salvation from their usurped place in theologies, are the signs of the incoming religion of the peoples. Popes hitherto have decided who should be canonized and what should be worshipped; princes, to whom statues should be erected, honors and riches given. Now the people are beginning to discern their heroes and saints. St. Anthony, St. George, St. Anna, and St. Denis, are far-away abstractions of virtues — myths to the Romanists and fables to the Protestants. But free men of all tongues and dogmas find in certain new beings the realizations of those deeds and convictions that help to improve their common lot. Wellington, the peer saint of England, provokes in them defiant skepticism; Louis Napoleon, the saint of the Bourse and hero of political chicanery,

distrust and vexation. But every noble instinct in human nature vibrates with hopeful thrill at the names of Saints Watts, Franklin, Rowland Hill, Lincoln, Garibaldi, John Brown, Nightingale, and the rest of the disinterested fighters of humanity's battles.

Sympathy is the life-blood of art. The more directly personal the one the greater the force of the other. A modern Venus has no individual interest. The Greeks called her a goddess, invented a history of her, and she had worshippers innumerable. After the same manner the mediævalists got their saints revered. Out of this deep devotion great art came. But the modern Italian artist no longer knows the mediæval saint or antique goddess with other enthusiasm than that of money or fame. For either he will do tolerably clever, academic work, on pagan or Christian commission, but his ideal Venus will prove to be a sensual abstraction and his devout saint a conventional symbol or dogma. Until he realizes his new saints and deities, Italy will know no more high art.

*Modern Italian art.*

Italian art and literature are too much a reflection of the past. The former especially is kept in existence by its traditions and erudition rather than by an understanding of the new order of things. The government considers it a duty to foster art by means of academies, competitive exhibitions, free lectures, and the annual purchase of certain works. Art, like other education, being made a pensioner of the state, the public, as is to be expected, assumes no responsibility in the matter, except under official pressure or professional clap-trap when some personal interest is at stake. There are no Italian buyers to speak of, unless a few amateurs at Naples or Milan suffice to represent the nation. Works purchased by the government are usually put where they are seldom seen. This is of little consequence, because in general they are not worthy of being exhibited.

In old historic countries, names and acts identified with their fame always live, though more or less vaguely, in the popular mind, and when selected by art, awaken a feeling of national pride. Sagaciously treated they reinvigorate patriotism and piety. Ussi's "Expulsion of the Duke of Athens from Florence." a forcible, realistic painting, was of this character. As significant of the wished-for exile of the Grand Duke, and driving the Austrians out of Tuscany, it was heartily welcomed. But there have not been many happy efforts in this direction. Ussi

himself seems to be exhausted by it. Those immense scenic pictures, of the "Destruction of the Cimbri by Marius," done by Altamura, are mere art-rant, and mark the last stage of decadence of high historic work. Fedi's marble group of the "Rape of Polyxena" has been placed by the Florentines in competitive proximity to the works of Michael Angelo, Donatello, Cellini, and Giovanni da Bologna. It is a noteworthy example of the Italian habit of looking behind instead of around or before in art and literature. Although the closely stuck drapery has a look of being just taken out of a wash-tub, and a falling figure is always a grave æsthetic defect, like stuttering in speech, yet as a whole it is a favorable illustration of the capacity of the modern academicians to treat whatever motives may be presented to them in a skilful manner, devoid of other ambition than to make an effective tableau. That so much talent and money can be in this age so misplaced, as concerns the public, is a direct impeachment of the old governmental tyranny over the artistic mind, which permitted no training that could enlighten the people or inspire them with that disquietude in existing things that prepares the way for something better. How could art thus repressed rise higher than mere mechanical excellence and a tolerable imitation of whatever in the past was officially endorsed as politically harmless! But if governments prevent the development of any genuine national life based on freedom, the artist also has much to answer for in bringing it into popular disrepute by his treatment of the permitted subjects.

The pest of modern classical and religious art is the predominance of the model. So that this is conspicuous, and the artist himself intrusively manifested by visual evidence of academic legerdemain, the fundamental idea is left to shift for itself. Out of very shame at its ignoble position it hides its ethereal form from mortal eyes. Something beside correct drawing and painting, even when these are attained, is required to make an artist. Good modelling, coloring, and composition are means, not ends. If an author has nothing to say, fine words only serve to make his ignorance more evident to those who look beneath the surface of things. This is equally true of art, though the æsthetic senses, being more susceptible to flattery at first blush than the other intellectual faculties, because of their general want of training, they are even oftener deceived into accepting the show for the substance of truth. How common it is now to see what are called beautiful works without any deeper emotion than

transient admiration of their clever execution! They fade from the memory at once. When this is the case, either the work has no substantial merit in itself, or there is nothing in the spectator's mind in affinity with it. This last may arise from ignorance or obtuseness of feeling, but it may be that the motive of the work is foreign to the sentiment and thoughts of the epoch. Art of this character, however learned and arrogant, has no legitimate claim on the people.

Benvenuti's showy frescoes in the Medicean Chapel at Florence, and his stupendous cartoons hung up like trophies in the Church of St. Francesco at Arezzo, are fine specimens of modern eclecticism after the David style, as are Canova's sculptures of his classical schooling. But all such work, tasteful and admirable as it may seem, ranks as prize art, and may be developed anywhere by forced culture and rewards of merit. Deriving no sustenance from the life of a people, the sensation it excites is partial and transitory, giving way to the next novelty of æsthetic fashion. Its valuable technical qualities work mischief when they are mistaken for high art itself. Unless Italy ceases as entirely to live in her old æsthetic, as in her effete ecclesiastical and political training, her promise of a future in art commensurate to her ancient renown is absolutely nothing. New Italy must make its gods in its own image, and not under the pressure of past form and example. It is difficult to bring the artistic mind to a recognition of this fundamental psychological truth. A nation, like an individual, can make a genuine character for itself only by strenuous exertions in harmony with its peculiar circumstances. Now, the clever artists of Italy look two ways at once for guidance: one eye turned to antiquity, the other to the imperial French schools, which are as bad guides in refounding their national art as are Napoleonic ideas in remodelling their government. We can have fashions of art at any moment by the same means and from similar sources that give the cut to our clothes. Create a pecuniary demand for anything of mere superficial worth, and its prolific manufacture is sure to follow. But the genuine art of a people precedes the stimulus of money, which more often corrupts and debases than exalts its character. If an artist aspire to be remembered beyond the fleeting glance of the seeker of sensuous sensations he must show that he is in earnest himself. If my reader doubt my sincerity, he will have thrown down the book in disgust before this, without troubling himself to test its

*Fashions of art.*

truth. Where a people are indifferent to art, it is certain that either there is no art for them to see, as in America, or as it now is in Italy, none of the time worthy to be seen.

As examples of mediæval faith and earnestness to contrast with modern treatment of similar motives, look at the Gothic tombs of Ubertino di Bardi in St. Croce, Florence, by Giottino, and of Niccolo Acciajuoli, by Orgagna, in the subterranean church of the Certosa. Some living artists might give more correctly modelled or drawn conventional figures to support the sarcophagus or receive the risen Bardi in the heaven to which he looks with clasped hands, but not one could compose a monument so *Christian* in feeling, and so thoroughly beautiful and elegant in form, and with such purity of design. The same remark applies to Orgagna's monument of the knightly founder of Certosa. He lies on his back in full armor, in marble sleep, with a calm assurance of immortality lighting up his war-worn features. The face of Donatello's warrior-saint in fighting guise, awaiting the attack of the arch-enemy of man, is not more aglow than his! There is still another sepulchral monument which forcibly illustrates the superiority of idea and execution of the mediævalists in work of this nature over all subsequent, of which, not to mention the inane productions of the present, the empty-minded monuments of the later Renaissance, in Santo Croce at Florence, erected to Michael Angelo and Dante, are conspicuous examples. The one referred to, seldom visited, is in the little church of San Francesco di Paolo at the foot of the hill of Bellosguardo, and was put up in memory of Frederigo, Bishop of Fiesole, A. D. 1459. Being the work of Lucca della Robbia, it is a simple and truthful specimen of realistic sculpture, broadly treated, and with deep religious repose. Nowhere is the Christian notion of "sleeping in Jesus" more admirably prefigured than in the placid slumber of the hopeful prelate. Evidently he will rise in joy unspeakable at the first note of the trumpet of resurrection.

Turn now to Dupré's "Pieta," a much lauded specimen of the Christian art of A. D. 1867. Some may claim that the drapery and anatomy are more scientifically treated than in the mediæval sculpture, though they certainly do not appear to me as being as correct in relation to the impression to be conveyed as a whole, however true any special detail may be. The composition is one of the frantic-ludicrous efforts which the sensational art of the day delights in; Dupré's "Cain" being another

though less absurd exhibition of spasmodic posing of limbs and features in lieu of real passion. Such is the gesture and look of the Virgin as she bows her head searchingly over the hair of her half-raised son, that irreverent wits insist that she is only expressing a mother's indignant surprise at finding it full of insects not to be named to ears polite. Sacred art which can suggest this idea cannot edify much.

The Neapolitan Morelli paints sacred subjects in a less ludicrous, declamatory style, but after a curious manner, equally removed from any profound feeling. He is versatile and clever, but neither sincere nor skilful enough to revive the dubious merits of the Spagnuola school of his native city, whose technical eccentricities he affects. So far as my observation goes, the "professors" of art, like those of literature, darken knowledge rather than enlighten the people or advance taste.

Ill-fated Bastianini, whose countrymen allowed him to starve on the wretched stipend of a *bric-a-brac* dealer until they awoke to his merits only to see him die, was a noteworthy exception to the general want of original talent and genuine feeling of modern Italian sculptors. The authorities of the Louvre Gallery have borne striking testimony to his capacity of modelling after the forcible realistic manner of the school of Donatello by buying, for thirteen thousand six hundred francs, his bust of the Florentine poet Jerome Benivieni who flourished in the fifteenth century, made in imitation of the style then in vogue. It was modelled from the person of a cigar-maker dressed in the costume of the poet's time, and sold to an antiquary for three hundred and sixty francs, who resold it to the French dealer of whom his government bought it, installing it among the genuine works of Michael Angelo, Settignano, and Cellini even after the proofs of the imposition were given to the public. Other specimens of his ability to recall the souvenirs of the past Italian sculpture have been from time to time, through no connivance of his, passed off as genuine mediæval work.

If Italy were to lose the misdirected stimulus of government and the foreign demand for her mechanical repetitions and imitations of her former art, principally in its cheaper decorative aspects, every semblance of her old art life would be gone. Italy now offers the cheapest market for æsthetic commonplaces. When the idea of art is limited to grubbing among the half-buried works of former ages, it is well to obtain it on the spot where its objects can be manufactured with the most facility. Still, the realistic

spirit of the century is showing itself even here. True there is no landscape art proper, as at the north. Italians of the upper class, when they walk, which they seldom do, apparently consider it a positive hardship, or else a dainty condescension on their part towards mother earth, for which she should be proud. To complete their satisfaction, in their brief promenade, they must be followed like shadows by servants in livery at a set distance, and be surrounded by a throng of fashionists, whose personal appearance eclipses in their eyes any charms of nature. Italians, however, have an intense admiration, in general volubly expressed, for the charms of the human figure, second only to their delight in tasteful dress. But what Italian gentleman ever looks upon the landscape with hearty English enjoyment, and makes any exertion to reach it, or ever alludes to it in conversation? Those who can afford villas have a sort of kid-glove taste for gardens mostly trimmed and arranged after a barber-shop fashion; a *rococo* arrangement of flower-pots, fountains, vases, *bric-a-brac* objects, and redundant sculptures: sometimes painted wooden figures, sentinels on duty, and miniature forts and castles, with geometrically laid-out walks and vegetation cut and tormented into formal unnaturalness.[1] The tradesman takes his taste from his superiors. With them artifice equally distorts or misrepresents nature, only its forms are more on the scale of toys. As for the average peasant, any genuine sympathy with the landscape would be an intellectual operation out of his range. I recollect calling the attention of one to a beautiful view near Serravallo. The sole response was, that since the change of government everything had gone bad, meaning really that wine, salt, and bread were dearer, and beyond their connection with the landscape it was nothing to him.

This universal apathy as regards one of the most simple and satisfactory sources of human happiness in a country where it richly abounds, springs from no inherent defect of æsthetic temperament, but from a defective mental training, which has made the Italians the most materialistic and least imaginative of civilized peoples. Extremely quick and acute in observation, with the seekers of pleasure, their desire goes towards persons and that which, to use their peculiar phrase, "makes a figure" in the world. With the studious it is directed towards abstract sci-

[1] The oddest bit of decorative sculpture I ever saw was in a Roman villa. It consisted of a painted stone sheet or piece of household drapery hanging out of a mock window as if to dry.

ence, antiquarianism, dilettanteism, and whatever regards man's past history more than his present relations to the nature amid which he dwells. While the public mind remains in this condition there is no base for landscape painting.

*Genre* motives are not so entirely wanting as those of landscape. Some stone carvers put pantaloons on their Cupids as a concession to modern realism, and sell scores of stone Washingtons and Franklins in the guise of little boys, with hatchets and whistles in their hands. Others carve the fleeting modes of the day on the effigies of their sitters, without regard to idealism of any sort. There are several *genre* painters, but of no special promise. The present incapacity of Italians in this direction must be seen to be understood. It proceeds from the national inaptitude of enjoyment of this class of motives. Animals are as much neglected as the landscape. In caricature there is more native talent displayed in personal and political subjects, and of a much higher grade, than in France. Architecture shares the low condition of the other branches. There is, however, among persons of culture a loving appreciation of whatever is fine in the past; pride in preserving it, and nice æsthetic discernment displayed in designs for completing or restoring mediæval work in the likeness of the original. But the restorations of the Duomo of Perugia are as bad as can be, being of a meretricious *café* order. Not even in America can there be found public buildings more wanting in æsthetic character than recent edifices constructed for the Italian government, especially in Florence. It is incomprehensible how the architects succeeded, in face of the old architecture of the city, in uniting so much homeliness and wrongness of general masses, mostly sham constructive ornamentation, to so much absolute poverty or ugliness of detail. The late Renaissance exhausted the base capacities of meretricious sensuality and pride of vulgar display; but this modern no-style is the very idealism of æsthetic meanness and incapacity. Turin shows somewhat better work. The constructive features of its great railway station are appropriate and dignified, manifesting fair inventive talent in the direction that modern architecture on a large scale, combining popular uses and needs with grandeur of effect, seems likely to take. Many of the decorative details, however, are unworthy of its general appearance.

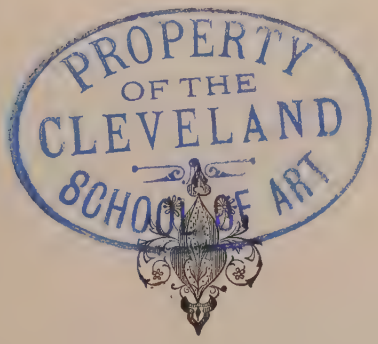
In conclusion, it is necessary to mention two works, as showing some disposition upon the part of modern Italian artists to

escape out of the worn idealisms and traditions of the past into fresher motives and styles. One of these is the well-known "Dying Napoleon" of Vela, which is as thoroughly realistic in conception and execution as the most ardent advocate of realism could desire, and not without some of the sentiment which attaches itself to the moribund warrior and lawgiver of nations. The other is a pure piece of idealism, novel for the school, and indeed new as a matter of heroic sculpture in any now; or was, when it was first put up in plaster ten years ago. Since then the Devil is becoming a popular motive of modern sculpture, especially with Americans, of two types: one, the wicked gentleman, the Mephistophiles of modern society, its ideal bad man in fine clothes with fine manners, dangerous in particular to the female sex, such as Mr. Gould's admirable bust makes him; and the other, the arch enemy of mankind and the Almighty, the Scriptural Lucifer, as conceived by Corti of Milan, and ordered to be executed in marble for the Count d' Aquila, brother of the ex-king of Naples. Corti makes no vulgar Satan with horns, hoofs, and tail, the superlative ugly monster of mediævalism, but a veritable fallen Son of the Morning; majestic in form, strong of limb, determined of will, supernal in figure, but sinister of aspect: a being enveloped in doubt, despair, and guilt; sufficiently attractive in mien to cast a spell over men or draw their sinful yearnings towards his by force of congenial sympathy. Æsthetically criticised, it is a genuine Satan of the right stamp to fascinate, tempt, or terrify mortals; one of themselves superhumanly wicked, powerful, and ambitious. As a conception it is not so original as it looks at first. The ancient Etruscans put many figures of similar type and import into their sepulchral art; beneficent and maleficent genii, or furies, they called them. It is nevertheless a wholesome symptom of progress to find at least one Italian sculptor of to-day turning to the genius of his remote ancestors for guidance and ideas in the grander elements of art in which they were conspicuously original and great.

The appearance of the supernal and gentlemanly types of the Devil in modern art is one of its significant features and of itself significant. Even an American lady of some reputation as a sculptor, Miss Stebbins of Rome, has essayed him in a heroic guise, in armor, as just descended on the earth to begin his mission of evil. We may yet see his colossal effigy figure in public edifices and grounds, and his statuettes, as the polite gen-

tleman of society, no questions asked as to moral character, in ladies' boudoirs and parlors. At all events the Devil has now got a firm footing in modern art, but with what results for good or bad, remains to be seen.

Despite Corti's example, for the moment Italy has neither an ideal art like its old, nor has it yet developed the realistic art, which dominates in countries more especially governed by democratic ideas and superior habits of domestic life. But the prevailing disquiet points to radical changes, which may finally recreate art on a more popular basis, revivify religion, and promote the general welfare of the country. Unless this is accomplished there is even less practical foundation for Gioberti's theory of the supremacy of the Latin races in Italy than in France, under the guidance of Napoleonic ideas. How can any student or statesman maintain such an illusion in face of the rapid advance and increasing pressure of the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon peoples over all the Latin forms of civilization in the present juncture of human destiny!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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ART OF HOLLAND, BELGIUM, SPAIN, AND GERMANY.

*Printing displaces religious art.*

WE have noticed how the invention of printing and Luther's Reformation displaced religious art. Words displaced symbols, and book-discussion supplanted fresco-painting. Thenceforth, images of divine things ceased to be made by hands, but were formed in the mind and conveyed from one to another as intangible thought, to take shape and color according to idiosyncrasies of imagination. Printed books in consequence became the means of a vast step forward in intellectual freedom and general culture. Wherever they were freely admitted, the old religious art either degenerated into a spurious fashion, having no vital force, or it was denounced as idolatry and eventually cast out of its fanes, or destroyed. For those who agree in relation to art that what has been may again be, it is requisite to look back on the causes of sweeping changes like the above, and see if they are of a fundamental or accidental nature, before they can rightly determine their final operation. To me it looks as if the influences which put an end to the great religious period of European art, are of a radical and permanent character, belonging to the logical sequence of development of the human mind in its advance from concrete to abstract idealisms. If poetry, the drama, and prose of a high order are more subtle mediums of intellectual expression than sculpture and painting, are they not the finer art? Who shall say that in their turn they may not give way to some more complete method of mental intercommunication! For the present, however, in the ratio of the culture of peoples, literature is the popular fine-art. I cannot believe that any nation, having won intellectual and religious freedom, will ever be successful, while books are easily to be had, in any spasmodic attempt to replace religious art on its old foundations. That was the natural outgrowth of its own time, just as education by means of books is of ours. Painting and sculpture have lost

their primitive authority and functions in respect to education. For the future they must be satisfied with their more legitimate office of contributing to the happiness of men, less as religious instructors than as æsthetic comforters and illustrators at second-hand, of ideas which find their first expression in books. This will tend more and more to make art a fruit of national culture rather than to take the initiative in civilization. Keeping this in view we get a ready clue to its varying conditions and absolute changes since Protestantism has altered the mental aspect of Europe.

*How the popes put out Protestant ideas in Italy.*

The popes put down Protestant ideas in Italy not so much by direct force as by the encouragement given to the revival of pagan literature and art, taken into the service of infidel tyrants both of church and state, and in their hands reduced to the degraded forms and motives I have already described. Like the Indians on our prairies when encircled by one fire, they fought it by another. It is true they preserved their positions, but it was at the sacrifice of the welfare of their subjects. Finally they have the bitterness of seeing those Protestant ideas, which they tried to keep out of Italy, returning in force to overthrow their systems of government and religion.

Sustained by absolute kings and the Inquisition, religious art made its last serious stand in Spain, more than a century after it had elsewhere become a sensual phantom or an inane pretence. It was here kept alive by the virtual prohibition of printing and the absolute restriction of education to priestcraft. In an intellectual point of view it had nothing in common with that of Italy. Rigorously confined to a fanatical and idolatrous aspect of worship, it became alike degrading to man and Deity. What else could art become in the hands of an ignorant clergy and bigoted statesmen, who, taking away its proper functions, reduced it to the lowest ascetic standard, scarcely one grade above fetichism, making physical degradation and mental abasement fill the same final place in their system that human beauty and heroic virtue did in ancient Greece?

The artistic capacity of the Spanish nation is abundantly proved by Morales, Cano, Velasquez, and Murillo, as well as by the taste of several rulers, in securing some of the most precious specimens of the Italian schools, despite the excluding canons of a persecuting church. Neither Egypt nor India in

the fulness of their sacerdotal zeal was more intolerant in matters of art than Spain. The artist could paint or carve only such subjects as suited his theological despots, and according to an unalterable formula of execution. Consequently we have in Spain an ecclesiastical but no national school of art. As the Spaniards are prone to excessive passions, and in their amusements and contests are bloody-minded and sensual, there can be little doubt that had not their art been thus held in strict ascetic check and external decorum, it would have revelled in the nude, vulgar, and cruel; not after the coarse littleness and superficial materiality of the Dutchmen, but in a passionate splendor which might have made the spectator forget its sins against humanity. But the evil side of the Spanish temperament is in large measure the product of his creed and government. There are certain religious crimes so profound that they spring upon the imagination like virtues, just as some aristocratic follies seem magnanimous in first blush from their frankness. Spaniards have been so long the dupes of their priests and rulers in both cases, that they have themselves acquired from them a counterfeit magnificence and frankness of wrong-thinking and doing that obfuscates the moral sense, and hinders national progress. A bigoted art, born of a religion fed on outrages against the rights of men, could not fail to be harmful by infiltrating public taste with its own remorseless spirit, approval of ignorance and idleness, and greed of blood. So far as concerns morality and intellectuality, Spanish art, like the state religion, has been a positive curse. Although the Inquisition could control its topics and treatment to their own ends, they had not the same power over the æsthetic temperament itself, whose instinctive choice was to common realistic types, a splendid coarseness of execution, glowing, luminous, sensualized tones of coloring, and a morbid satisfaction in gloom, sorrow, suffering, despotic authority or ignoble sacrifice; and finally in the predominance given the material and external, whether of princely or sacred motives, over the spiritual and intellectual. Spanish art is almost exclusively emotional in intent or else given to the expression of one idea or phase of character, which makes it restrictive and narrow. What is lacking in intellectual breadth and variety, is made up in depth of sentiment and vigorous execution. Its sincerity adds a quasi dignity even to ordinary motives. Further, there is a passionate mystery or technical force in its dramatic coloring, which appalls or fascinates at first look.

Murillo kept common company as much as he dared. His virgins, angels, and saints are slightly elevated types of the people around him. Beggar-boys and mendicant monks suited him well; but above all the palpitating charms of the maidens of his ardent climate in their virgin ripeness. But the Inquisition scourged the sensuous activity of his temperament into an ascetic discipline, which deprived the world of the finest fruits of his talents, and reduced him to a half use of his legitimate genius. *Murillo. Velasquez.*

Velasquez's career was that of a petted court painter. His brush ennobled those who failed to ennoble themselves, or had nothing but insignia of rank to make them known. He intensified the dominant traits of his sitters, making them acutely characteristic, without any of the mock heroic idealisms that Rubens indulged in with his Bourbons. But his chief power was in an aristocratic largeness of design, naturalness of style, sparkle, and emphasis, more effectually realistic than the utmost Dutch finish. He did not rival Murillo in sensuous diaphanous coloring, though excelling him in light and atmosphere, in grave splendor, subtle, and forcible delineation of character and depth of effect.

We need not look for the poetical or imaginative in Spanish art; seldom for very refined treatment, and never for any intellectual elevation above the actual life out of which it drew its restricted stock-motives. What could be expected of painting in a country where masked inquisitors visited every studio and either destroyed or daubed over any details that did not accord with their fanatical scruples; of sculpture which was dressed or painted to imitate actual life, and where an artist could not destroy the labor of his own hands, if a sacred image, without risk of being put to torture for sacrilege? There are admirable points in Spanish painting, but it is not a school of popular value or interest. Besides its two chief names it has no reputation beyond its own locality. The fixed purpose of its priest-ridden work was to stultify the human intellect and make life a burden instead of a blessing.

Holland was as antagonistic to Spain in her art as her politics. Here the Reformation took firm root, democratic habits got the ascendency, and a people for the first time since the death of Christ had their own way in art, unchecked by reasons of government or creed. As regards high art the result was not edifying, but it demonstrated the wisdom of leaving artists and amateurs free to exercise their taste and *School of Holland.*

skill as seemed to them best. Dutch painters may be called the natural product of their country, in the same sense that canals and dykes were the necessary features of its landscape. Having reached the mental level of those they worked for, they rested contentedly in view of flat horizons and unæsthetic commonplaces, satisfied to gain money by a painstaking imitation of the externals of the scenery and life around them, just as their patrons made their fortunes in the same scenes by a never flagging attention to profit and loss. The more intellectual wants of Dutchmen were supplied by a printed literature, that made them pious and patriotic, as well as clear-headed in trade and independent in politics. They were as much inclined to keep the liberty they had won with their swords as the money they had made in their business. In past times high art had been associated with the tyranny they had overthrown. Art they still liked and would have. But it must be their boon friend and entertainer. So they tore down its old forms from church and palace, as things evil and false, and took its spirit into their shops and to their firesides to be recast into shapes that should amuse their wives and little ones. As was natural, these wives, children, and the stout burghers, too, had an honest liking for those objects most intimately associated with their notions of pleasure and prosperity. They did not want art to teach them ideas but to represent things. Compared with that of the Southern races theirs was as distinct in its foundations, motives, and aims as trade is from poetry. In the first place it was chiefly an in-door, easel art, almost as cheap and portable as books themselves, and with producer and buyer ruled by commercial principles. Outside of the ordinary stimulus of business and popular likings it had no abiding inspiration. Nor had it any special ambitions, enthusiasms, or idealisms, such as are the roots of a high art. Whatever a patron would pay for the artist would produce to the best of his ability. He worked for a ready market. Whether the character of his art was in itself good or evil was to him of as little consequence as is to the rum-seller the effects of his liquors on the health of his customers. Dutch art was made to be sold, and its ethics assume no higher standard. Spanish art was made to dogmatize, threaten, and impose lies on a nation; to seduce it from truth and justice, independent judgment in matters terrestrial or celestial, and to blind obedience in things present in order to win the promised enjoyments of a future life. The Spaniard, full of the delusions

of his art-religion tried to coerce the Hollander into a similar condition. Motley shows us how and why he failed. Common as was Dutch art it was more healthful for a nation than the Spanish. If it did not aspire to teach, neither did it mislead the mind. There was no disguise or latent meaning to it. He that ran might comprehend it. The basis was democratic liberty of choice as opposed to aristocratic exclusiveness and ecclesiastical rigor of selection. Dutch politics and religion alike condemned the high art of the past, while the public scarcely cared for fine art of any character. In all free countries popular art being based on popular liberty, must necessarily follow the lead of its guardian. Under favorable conditions the common mind finds its way out of vulgar thought to higher aspirations. Among the æsthetic changes produced by the Reformation there is none more apparent than that which places the future of all genuine art more and more in the hands of the people, just as it does the final decision of their political destinies. Popular election is the very marrow of Protestant art. The Dutch school was a vigorous, wholesome protest against those controlled by Romanism. Intellectually, its choice was low and unrefined. It ignored moral significance, yet its feeling, although common, was not unsound at heart. I should say that it lacked both æsthetic and intellectual sensibility. There was no ambition for a historical art; but small desire even for the higher motives of domestic life. Its speciality was vulgar *genre;* avoiding all thought, and priding itself on its mechanical skill and infinite patience. There never was a more purely mechanical, commonplace school of painting combined with so much minute finish and fidelity to the ordinary aspect of things, heedless of idealisms of any sort. If it labored for any special end it was that of ocular deception. In this respect, therefore, its notion of art was like that of a child or savage, while its selection of objects to be represented was equally unsophisticated.

Humanity is overmuch shown under vulgar aspects, and nature at large in its commonplaces, while small things are made of equal importance to great. If there be any striking emphasis, it is to be found in the predominance given to boorish brawls, feastings, mean lives, or pride in wealth, civic rank, and dress; pampered animal pets and the usual accompaniments of fashionable inanity. Avarice, too, was most truthfully depicted, and drunkenness, but lust and nudity not so conspicuous as in the French school. They showed their love of the sea as of

their monotonous landscape and houses of picturesque homeliness, because of their associations with their independence and comfort. Fine ladies and fine cattle were painted from the same point of view; fine clothes and a fine skin set off by luxurious surroundings, or a golden tinted sky, both beast and woman chewing the cud of animal repose. Who but a Paul Potter could have painted "La Vache que p———" of the Hague, an offensive realism highly appreciated by his countrymen but alike disgusting either as art or nature. But Dutch art is too well liked and known for me to dwell longer on it. Those whose æsthetics are in sympathy with its mental mediocrity will not desert it for anything I may say. Nor would I have them until they are prepared to appreciate a higher standard. That of Holland is a hearty stimulus to the animal, material, and trading instincts of a people; not altogether in a debasing sense, but as exhibiting their fruits at their accepted social value and national consideration. It gives, too, honest work for hard-earned dollars. But as an agent of intellectual progress it is of doubtful worth. The tendency is rather to materialize the understanding and sensualize the taste, without yielding any sustenance to the imagination.

*Rembrandt. Rubens.*

Every people, however, has its native genius that caps its fame in the direction of its national proclivities, or carries them far onward into hitherto unexplored regions of imagination and methods of execution. Rembrandt has done for Holland what Turner has for England, and Doré is now doing for France: the artistic strength and weakness of each race attaining its generic climax in each of these men. Rembrandt's mastery of his vehicles is that of a giant. He creates effects as the Mosaic record says day and night were made. But he cannot separate himself nor his country from his work. His religious pieces are Dutch translations or travesties of the original scenes; not to illustrate the story, but to demonstrate Rembrandt's wonderful control of light, shadow, and color in evoking form, a powerful creating faculty and strong hand in harmonious combination, intensely coloring his work with his own individuality. Whether looking at etching, portrait, landscape, or figure composition by him, the first and last consciousness is, — Rembrandt.

In a minor degree this is true of the Flemish Rubens. What is now Belgium, being then a rigid Roman Catholic country, its art was subordinated to the usual papal influences. In its first

stage it is allied to early German art in intellectual character and design, and to the Venetian in richness of coloring. But it is not necessary to dwell on the minor schools, unless, as in the case of Holland, they present new distinctive features. I allude to Rubens on account of his omnivorous characteristics. Vulgar, profane, aristocratic, and sacred themes, either in a realistic, allegorical, or idealistic sense, he treated with like amorous ardor, provoking an æsthetic appetite that increased as it fed. His flexibility, fertility, and versatility astonish, while his bacchanal tints, brimming with animal life, are poured on to his canvas as if from a conjurer's inexhaustible bottle, and run of themselves into the forms he wills. Contrasted with this torrent-like capacity, Rembrandt's dark force is law itself. But there are analogies of manner and taste between them. Both spring effects and style on the spectator, overriding their subjects. Rembrandt's "Guard-house" is an æsthetic miracle. One forgets his curiosity as to its meaning, in its super-excellence as art. While looking at a brilliant spectacle in the street you would as soon be inquisitive about the life of each person in the crowd, as to ask why that stream of humanity with flashing arms is emptying itself out of that impenetrable shadow, into the fitful glare beyond. The scene recalls the sluggish, eddying, and jerking flow of liquid lava, seen by night as it breaks away from its black bed, pushing itself forward uncertain where, but murkily joyous to burst its bonds and spirt its ominous splendor against the clear sky above. Rubens does not come up to this, but his pictures nevertheless are equally an emphatical outpouring of himself. We must look at these two men through glasses of their own coloring. Each uses coarse types, exaggerates the physical and material, does with satire or sly delight unæsthetic or even dirty things, roots in human nature as the hog does in the ground, perchance bringing to light a precious stone, but sure to lay bare many things a fastidious taste deems best hid, employs heavily loaded palettes, and sweeps broadly and daringly with his brush, infusing color with intense life and vehement movement. Rembrandt bids darkness speak for him; is conventionally decorous in costume, loads an angel down with drapery so that he flies only by the sheer projection given by his brush. Rubens commands the magic of light; throws off clothing, delights in naked skin, big limbs, colossal charms, and vinous tinted flesh that often hints at corruption. The Dutchman is self-hidden, peers from out of dark places; a sphinx, intractable,

isolated, pimpled-visaged, greedy, glum; the Fleming, jovial, sensuous, handsome, magnificent. His tastes and habits are those of a cultivated gentleman. Prodigally luxurious, he alarms a king of Spain to whom he goes as an ambassador, lest his example should be considered a reproach to royal prudence; recognizes his masters, and makes a gallery of their works; reproduces them by his own hands very much as Bacchus might play Apollo, or Venus the Madonna; a zealous Catholic with liberal instincts, and despising asceticism.

I fancy he saw through royal shams, for in filling to order those acres of canvas in the Louvre, whose scrubbed brightness gives a false idea of his real melody of tints, he makes the allegorized Bourbons seem like the great geese they were, in playing at gods with the instincts of clowns; conjuring up pompous artifices and meretricious nonsense that savor more of the madhouse imagination than of rational beings. But they paid well, and were excellent practice for his filibustering brush. To see the genuine Rubens, stript of æsthetic disguise and courtly grimace, look at his "Rural Fête" in the same gallery. Here is a hearty painting of boors and booresses engaged in a drunken lewd revel; a characteristic scene of his country, which he must often have gazed at with infinite amusement. How they hug, strain, lift, whirl, embrace, rollic, and swell! See that rising tide of amorous passion and jealousy; hearken to the encouraging jeers of the lookers on; a variety of action and feeling put into a harmonious unity of debauchery and rural pleasuring, in strict keeping with one of those delicious, satyr-like landscapes, redolent of sensuous health and enjoyment, which Rubens knew so well how to paint! And this true to nature, equally devoid of grotesque or obscene exaggeration of the Doré kind, and of the silly sentimentalism of the Boucher sort on the other. Rubens was too sincere an artist to mix up romanticism or idealism with smut. He bade nature speak without maskery. One little picture of this kind is of tenfold more consequence than all those foolish allegories that stare at the visitor up and down the long gallery.

*Germany.*

A volume apart would be needed even to skim the art of Germany, if it were to be treated for its own sake. But as I confine myself simply to pointing out the modification in its character caused by the Reformation, I shall refer only to its leading traits, without venturing upon the prolific subject of its eminent schools. German art has an important rela-

tion to modern civilization as the product of a highly intellectual race, in whose domain began that religious contest, still going on, which divided Germany into two ritualistic camps, affording a comparison, side by side, of the practical results of the antagonistic principles of Protestantism and Papacy in human progress. We have only to note the direction taken by political power, material well-being, and general mental growth to see at once which system in an open field of action in the long run obtains the supremacy, and drags the other after it, vainly struggling to free itself from the Laokoön coil of popular education.

Before Luther's time the art of Germany was more devoutly Roman Catholic than that of Italy, for it had been less subjected to seductive classical influences. Allowing for local differences as to popular saints and traditions, and the weird northern element of demonism born of pagan ancestry, the best feeling of both countries ran in the same theological channel, was based on a community of motives and aims, and vented in a sacred art that forestalled literature and sermons, with similar results on the people, as their chief means of intellectual discipline. Perhaps the influence of German religious art was the more forcible from the fact that it was more explicitly a national development of Christianity unbiassed by any previous types of an æsthetic ideal. Such idealism as it created was subordinated to its sacred motives. How original and suggestive in a spiritual sense Teutonic faith became in the prime of its zeal, as it was converted into architecture, we still have rich evidence in the Gothic cathedrals of the "Fatherland." A similar sentiment and treatment obtained in their easel pictures and movable sculpture. Their prevailing character was an earnest simplicity, quaintness it might be termed, pushing bluntly aside all classic idealism of form to make more emphatic the absolute thought and governing sentiment. These were quite abstract, often of a mystical or metaphysical intent, showing that the ruling theology had rooted itself even deeper in the artistic mind than those histories and biographies, which occupied so conspicuous a place in Italian art. German religious art generally makes the fundamental idea the important element, while in the Italian the artistic inclination went more towards pictorial composition. This was subordinated to æsthetic taste in a higher degree, its design was better, forms simpler, details purer, meaning clearer, to the common mind, and as a whole more beautiful to the cultivated. German artists made less account of the sensuous, nude, or

sensual, yet gave to details a materialistic importance at variance with the chief motive and otherwise abstract bias of their works. Even in the finest periods of the religious schools of Flanders and Germany we see cropping out those likings for the substantial things of this life, the landscape teeming with good fruits and rich harvests, in-door luxury, fine apparel, and precious ornaments, which subsequently ran riot in the Dutch. Their style was ornate, minute, and severe. Design was heavy, sharp, and angular, without grace; quite the reverse of Greek practice of refined gradation of curves; so that we perceive the German figures by their firm incisive outlines rather than by the more advanced system of insensible modelling of the entire form, each part in exquisite harmony with the whole, with no definable separations of brush or chisel stroke, of which perhaps the most life-like example in color is Titian's "Venus" of the Tribune at Florence, and one of the best in rounded form is the Medicean "Venus" underneath it. Take the contrary method, sink the expression of vitality of surface-aspect into a realistic individualism of features, add extra angularity of dividing lines, drapery too cumbersome for actual wear, cover it with profuse ornament, multiply patiently elaborated details, disregard symmetry, proportion, and unity in large measure equally with the exigencies of the actual spectacle, but keep the masses well balanced, interpret the conception according to the local standard of ideas and things, the composition the while making a richly colored and picturesque whole, and the reader gets a fair idea of the German method of religious art before the Reformation.

*Albert Durer.*

Albert Durer stands, in relation to it, as Rembrandt to Dutch and Raphael to Italian art, but on a higher plane of devout feeling and intellectual apprehension. His imagination is more interpenetrative and mystical, evoking new forms to fit the essences of ideas or reproducing past scenes in the light of his own home-fed vision. It is a profound genius of touching simplicity and sincerity, somewhat sad in ratiocination and sentiment, eschewing ideal beauty, loving the exact fact or semblance of it, yet ever aspiring to the abstract and spiritual. If I love Raphael for his sensuous grace and joy, I am equally drawn to Durer by his omission of them. I feel that they would weaken the ineffable tenderness of truth that his introspective heart pours out to the world with such guileless sensibility; a trait in genius rarer than the finest æsthetic sentiment, matched in rarity only by the creative majesty of Michael An-

gelo's isolated mind. Albert Durer was a suitable climax to the intensest qualities of the religious art of his country, just as it began to decline before the influx of printing. Hans Holbein the elder is a German Leonardo, almost matchless in his finest portraiture in solidity of style and intense realism of character.

The immediate benefit of Protestantism was that it relieved the human mind from the worst of the one-sided ecclesiastical pressure, and permitted it also to think in other directions. Theologies have ever had a distrust of natural science for the reason that they declare their base to be an immutable one, revealed of God, while that of science moves on with every fresh discovery. Art favored their assumptions, inasmuch as it kept before the people in attractive shapes those dogmas on which were founded the claim of divine authority. The "thus saith the Lord" of art is a potent appeal to all persons, sustained as it is by prerogatives whose origin is lost in the night of ages, and, to minds undisciplined by reason, irresistible. Enunciated with the emotional blandishments and force of imagination of high art, it has a readier capacity either to fortify truth or to diffuse error than have books.

*Comparison between books and art.*

These are slow of tongue, speaking to one mind at a time, are fastidious as to opportunity and introduction, while painting and sculpture possess the glib faculty of extemporaneous speaking to crowds of people, in all moods and seasons, predisposed by the deceptive logic of their physical organs to believe what they see. The image of the idea lodges itself instantaneously in the unwary soul without being subjected to the challenge of logic. Indeed, next to music, the plastic and pictorial forms of art most speedily fascinate the senses. They further beguile the mind into an æsthetic languor which impairs the hardier processes of critical thought. Used with evil intent, or even stupidly, art has always done incalculable harm, by seducing the public into habits of superstition or sensuality, fostering the light vices of human nature to the undermining of its solid virtues. Wherever discussion is most restrained, there art has most license, because it is easily kept moving in those directions which are not offensive to governments founded on breech-loaders. Encouragement of art by despotism has a captivating ring to the popular ear, but it is a snare and delusion to true civilization. Tyrants first cunningly emasculate it of nobility of spirit, and then throw it as a sop to a defrauded people, or else train it to systematic baseness

to subserve sinister policies or conceal selfish passions by plausible æsthetic masquerading. Art is a convenient domino to cover up the legalized robbery of a nation's treasure as well as a temptation to infinite squandering. Louis XIV. spent one thousand million francs of Frenchmen's money on an ugly show-house for himself, and then burned the accounts to hide the extent of the theft.

Not to be too severe on men of his pattern, I do not doubt that the wrong they inflict on men and art, after all, is in keeping with their honest notions about both.

In either case they are too demented by absolute power to be capable of common sense, much less of a right view of their artificial relations to their own species. But this aggravates their mischief, and ought long ago to have weaned men from any dependence on one-man power, whether by right of royal cradle or deluded suffrage. The Lutheran Reformation was a great step towards putting Christianity into its normal position as regards human progress. Its tendency was not only to dissever it from the exclusive service of reigning castes and creeds, but to discriminate between it as an æsthetic principle merely, and art for the elevation of humanity. Art for art is beautiful, as Victor Hugo says, but art for mankind is both beautiful and sublime. Its mission is not complete unless it keeps the moral ideal as purely in its heart as the æsthetic in its eye.

Protestantism has not yet reached this stage. Its career is too recent and undeveloped to have produced in art other changes than an abandonment of old motives and styles, and a diversion of its current to other channels, without as yet any special excellence or exhaustion of its democratic capacities of variety of choice and adaptation to the expanding tastes of the multitude. The new art is feeling its way through good and bad experiment to a more satisfactory condition, borne hither and thither in the disquiet of peoples, now ignored, now petted by fashion, uncertain of movement and inspiration, but steadily rising on the tide of naturalistic truth and working its way into popular favor. In Germany, modern art has been kept alive by its mixed religious, liberal, and reactionary ideas, stilted patronage, like that of the kings of Bavaria, and scholastic culture, assuming a universality of features that offers something to the liking of every one, without being productive of much popular edification or establishing a distinctive modern school of a European reputation. Germany has not yet reached the height of her old re-

nown. There is a bias to academic systems and realistic forms based on laborious study; as for instance the Dusseldorf school, which is pedantic, formal, external, unimaginative, and unæsthetic in the ideal sense; clever in execution, without any pure instinct of color; prone to common things, and much given to pictorial rant when it grows ambitious of dramatic compositions. It is a plodding school of mediocrities in its best men, while the works of the common rank and file serve as the primers and grammars of art-training of the public eye. There is also a conservative religious school illustrated by Overbeck and an eclectic one by Cornelius and Kaulbach, who thought to recast the art of the nineteenth century in old moulds, and with about as much permanent success as a new order of Stylites might expect. These artists are ambitious, learned, sincere, and skilful. But the common people wonder, shake their heads, and straightway forgetting the big paintings, compounded of defunct foreign systems and feelings, pass on to admire the easel representations of things familiar and domestic. Modern democratic taste, right or wrong, will not tolerate asceticism, allegory, religious or classical, idealism, mysticism, romanticism, or other passion of the past, while it can command a plentiful supply of its own loved naturalism. Its idols must talk its own tongue, and have a fellow-feeling. Democracy has hit the right path for a more wholesome art of its own than aristocracy ever worked out for itself. Believe, and *then* be baptized. The habit of church or state is to baptize first, leaving the neophyte to believe if he can, disbelieve if he dare.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ENGLISH ART.

NOWHERE are the generic distinctions of Protestant and Catholic art more obvious than in England and Spain. Holland and Spain were contemporaries in the best periods of their schools, both vehemently materialistic in feeling, though differing widely in other respects; Dutchmen painting with beaver-like instincts, while Spaniards imparted to their brushes somewhat of their own sombre grandiloquence of speech and flow of passion. The saving's bank principle of accumulation by a series of little industries and assiduous toil, always excepting Rembrandt's grand manner, chiefly obtains in the Dutch manner. In the Spanish there is the reverse process of producing imposing general or specific effects by a large touch and direct stroke looking steadily at a final success, disdainful of wayside finish and distracting side-play of detail. The English school, without arriving at the summit of technical excellence of either of the others, partakes in its extremes somewhat of both, while its sentiment is equally national. Further, there is an ignorance and indifference in regard to it in the general European mind about as complete as that of the art of Japan, while it was excluded from the knowledge of the rest of the world by the timid policy of its government. Nothing like this has operated to seclude English art. On the contrary, England is an asylum of nations. There are no barriers to ingress or egress of people or art. Anglo-Saxons emigrate and travel more than other races. By these means they spread their notions and habits faster and further than the rest of mankind. Actually they have done the most to raise the standard of the moral and physical well-being, promote material comfort, and enlarge the horizon of political liberty, in fine, to diffuse civilization by individual example, of any people Americans fail to appreciate what Europe was before this influence was brought to bear on it, unless they step out of the common track

*General ignorance of English art in Europe.*

of tourists. A few miles of side-travel will carry them back almost to the social conditions of the dark ages, divested of their picturesquesness. To realize the vast scale of English civilization, we must take in at one view America and Australia, watch the intellectual and religious light that is penetrating Asia from this source, and observe how the presence of the English race is felt wherever it settles, in ameliorating local discomforts, introducing sanitary innovations, and improving the common ideas of truth, chastity, cleanliless, humanity to animals, and public decorum. Those who regard only individual exceptions will deride this statement. But I base it on twenty years' experience in different countries. The habits of personal propriety and self-reliance which the educated Englishman takes with him to the four quarters of the globe are a source of improvement to all peoples. Setting aside those large ideas and enterprises which grow well only in free countries, I thank him for showing the good of pure water, soap, ventilation, warmth, fixed prices, full measure, punctuality, bathing, open-air exercise and games, doors that will close, chimneys that will draw, windows that will open and shut, sewerage and drainage that will do their duty, and in fine for his reforming zeal in little things. I sympathize in his abhorrence of the stinks, filth, rotten beggary, and hypocritical knavery too common on the Continent; of the prevalent desire of being carried through life, Sinbad fashion, on some one else's back, so that the legs of many persons come to lose their natural office of support; in his contempt for that common style of tailor-made men who push women into the gutter in the street, stare them into scornful immobility of feature for self-protection, or plot how they may entrap some weak female into supporting them in affluent idleness for the sake of a comely person or forlorn title. The amount of starvation of body at home to keep up a show out of doors by the Southern races, must be witnessed to be comprehended by comfort-exacting Anglo-Saxons.

Impatient of shams and equally beguiled by material interests, the American is England's own child, intensified by larger freedom, greater self-assertion, and emancipation from "vested" wrong. Neither Americans nor English are liked in Europe, except for their money and the reliance on their promises to pay. Both are too restless under imposition and arbitrary power, too little possessed of the spirit of "*pazienza*," to be popular. Their frankness of damning grates on the ears of those

who unconsciously offend them from ignorance of their ideas and habits. The American being the last comer, more of a spendthrift, and less mixed up in the politics of Europe, though he begins to loom portentously, is the less disliked. Moreover, he is more flexible, impressible, and cosmopolitan in temperament. There is in him the possibility of relationship to all the rest of the world, even the negro. Distance also lends some enchantment to the foreign view of his person. European idealists see in America the great primary school of democratic progress. An American, therefore, wherever he is, should live in the light of his own institutions, talk from his throat instead of his nose, not be unmindful of the grammar of his mother-tongue, train his manners in accordance with the requirements of polite society, — which is a fine art in itself, — and not strive for those aristocratic appearances which, like the donkey in the lion's skin, only advertise his imposture. Rather let him imitate the Englishman, who carries his island on his back, an inconvenient burden at times, but in the end beneficial. An American, keeping faith with his proper principles, will finally be more respected as an individual, and more useful as an example of republican civilization, than if he fades into an indefatigable snob, clamoring for the privileges of that birthright he has bartered away for a mess of aristocratic porridge. A genuine American can teach Europe much that concerns popular education and individual development that an Englishman has not yet grown up to. Still, I repeat, we do owe him thanks for the good service already done. This, too, despite frequent insular haughtiness, indifference, an alpine egotism, want of tact, amenity, and recognition of rights and ideas not registered in his conventional text-books or systems, and the selfish sophistry and offensive arrogance with which he prematurely sneered at the downfall of democracy and the destruction of the great Republic. My great uncle, I hated you then! I kept warm in my heart your long list of national crimes, — not blunders, but coolly adopted policies and opinions, against the defeated or those who do not fall into your way of thinking; like the blowing away of Hindoos from the mouths of cannons, less to torture their bodies than as a touch of extra damnation to their souls; that letter of Ruskin declining intercourse with Americans, because of the wickedness of fighting to put down slavery, in the same breath that he was anathematizing England for not fighting in support of his gyratory ethics; the idiotic conclusion of Carlyle as to the

meaning of the North; and the snap-judgment of British Lords and Commons upon America in her severest trials.

Let the dead bury the dead. At least, let us not imitate evil. The world owes more to England than it has the grace to acknowledge. Its manners are blunt, reserved, but hearty. If other populations travelled as much as Englishmen, we should see in them even more to vex or annoy. There would be some new lessons in stinginess, deception, dirtiness, and the vocabulary of profanity and obscenity as a fine art, practised by an enraged vulgar-minded Latin, and sundry personal habits that little suit English and American notions of propriety. There would be plenty of fault-finding and but scant reforming; for the protest of the Latin is limited to his personal desires and hearers, while the vigorous grumble of the Englishman, and his emphatic denunciations at bad faith and scanty accommodations, echoed by a sympathizing press, operates both as a preventive and a cure. The one would rely on the government to make all smooth for him; the other denounces, and puts his own hand to the reform. An average Englishman, being either the most pertinacious conservative as to what relates to his own class of ideas or the most earnest reformer as to those of others, is certain to offend in both ways.

*Causes of insularity of English art*

Although English art shows names that would confer honor on any modern school, in spirit and execution it is reforming and innovating, besides being insular in position. The Dutch school is less intellectual, varied, and inspiriting, yet its works abound in the galleries of Europe, everywhere in protesting contrast to Roman Catholic art, while there are to be seen out of Great Britain no English pictures of account. Part of this neglect is due to the scale of home prices, which is far above that of the Continent, but it is mainly owing to ignorance and that prejudice against English individualism which tones their art as much as their manners. Still these circumstances do not explain why foreign governments have given no place to English paintings in their galleries. Turner, who in his sphere, was quite as remarkable as their great painters, is almost as unknown in their art world as the Japanese Oksai. Other distinguished names fare no better. So much the worse for Europe. England herself cultivates a catholic taste in literature and art. She collects from all sources to aid her own intellectual development, without stint of money, and finally with sagacity,

thanks to the criticism her system of æsthetic training has fostered. Elsewhere culture of this character is wholly a care of government. Here it has been only recently initiated on a large scale, and by private zeal, as it were, forced into the official budget. Whether it is better for the government or the people to take the initiative and direction in all matters of education, is an open question. The first system hastens development, but is apt to mislead or pervert, while the second, if slower, is more sure to be a genuine expression of national taste and needs. In art, as in politics, the less a people are governed *downwards*, the better. Hot-house forcing of an eclectic art after the Munich pattern, imposed on an indifferent population, is certain to meet with the fate of seed sown on rocky ground. The mixed English system has greatly benefited the nation by giving vent to the æsthetic convictions of those best qualified to stimulate the public mind in this respect, and by promptly supplying those artistic helps which were out of the reach of private enterprise. In America we must await individual action both as to initiation and organization. All that the legislature may do is to legalize its work, and if persuaded of its general utility, give it incidental aid. The last and most difficult task of the American people has invariably been to enlighten their law-makers. As yet their ignorance of art is hopelessly profound. Compared with ours, the English are supremely wise in their generation; and this wisdom is the result of the mental activity of a few persons, who, having studied the subject in its relation to British civilization, have succeeded in convincing Parliament of its practical importance.

The present English school is scarcely a century old. While England was Roman Catholic, her art, which was more than respectable in architecture, was imbued with the same religious sentiment as that of her neighbors. Here we may again observe of how little weight are race or climate in artistic development compared with ideas. With one class of convictions England wrought abundantly and well. As they changed, art, too, changed. The book influence becoming very strong and taking an iconoclastic direction, for a long period the æsthetic training was set aside, or put on a very inconsequential footing. This withdrawal of art from its old position was the less felt because of the brilliant literature that took its place. So far was the intellectual development of England from being suspended

by the Protestant reaction against art, that it was carried forward more rapidly than ever, surpassing that of the other peoples who were in different degrees subjected to similar revolutionary changes. We may miss in England a distinctive school of painting equal to that which existed in Spain, Holland, or Germany in the first centuries subsequent to the Reformation, but its absence is more than compensated by the artistic superiority and wholesomeness of its prose and poetry. They trained a public to think profoundly as well as to feel deeply, which was more than art could do by itself. Likewise they kept in active circulation those principles of political science which subsequently ripened into American freedom. Therefore if our ancestors at this juncture produced no masterpieces to match those of Rembrandt, Rubens, or Velasquez, or school-work equal to that of Claude, Salvator Rosa, and the Carracci, they were busy in solving an abstract problem of civilization, which they finally brought to a practical solution of infinitely more benefit to men than fine sculpture and painting by themselves. We may wish we had more treasure of this sort, but in view of our old English literature and present political advance, we have no reason to covet the above names.

*Influence of fashion.*

It must, however, be confessed that religious prejudices and materialistic tendencies caused an unnecessary amount of æsthetic poverty, which did not much abate until the Royal Academy was founded, and the aristocracy made a lion of Reynolds. Just what is now happening in America occurred then in England. Fashion set up for an amateur. To have a taste always implies a flattering distinction, the more so when the crowd associates it in its superficial judgment with titles or wealth. It is not a generous patronage of art, but the best to be had in the present condition of Protestant human nature. Money and rank had far more to do in putting the English school on its legs than intelligent criticism or a universal desire for pictures.

I confine my remarks to them, because English sculpture, with partial exception, is too mechanical and commonplace to take a generic position. Flaxman had taste and genius in design, but he cannot be accounted a great sculptor. Chantrey, Marochetti, and other well-known names appear as shrewd contractors of moderate executive skill and scant æsthetic knowledge, foisted into notoriety and wealth by an imbecile patronage created by adroit patron-hunting. Gibson was a diluted Greek of the decline; a clever artist, but bestowing on his country

nothing in sympathy with current ideas and feelings. He is one of those classical pedants, of whom Canova is the chief, who, acting as plausible guides to the antique, mislead the public in its conceptions of it. The English mind either does not take to sculpture, or sculpture does not take to it. So far from there being in this department indications of an original excellence corresponding to the progress of the sister-art, or to architecture as a constructive whole, each fresh name marks further retrogression. And England owns the Elgin marbles!

English painting reflects the tastes and habits of the population at large, drawn by the climate rather towards a fireside, easel art, than to out-door, monumental work. Those motives are preferred which are associated with ordinary enjoyments. Next, those which illustrate facts, scenes, or sentiments. There is little passion in English art,— instead, the domestic affections, loyalty, self-esteem, and whatever manifests the national power. There is, too, a hearty love of the sea, landscape, the substantial fruits of wealth, wit, humor, exposure of social shams and follies, respect for morality, mingled with adulation of rank and the mere fighting class, whether of the ring or war-office. It is a common school in many respects, and material in its longings; but it never descends to the bottom of Dutch motives, although its respect of animal vigor, the turf and chase, and delight in physical sensations, are frankly avowed. If Englishmen prize health in man and strength in beasts, it is more for the power they confer of overcoming difficulties than as sources of sensual pleasures. Etty is a rare example of a sensuous artist, and he produced phantoms, not flesh, as impalpable, unformed, and unseductive as the vague forms of a dream. The school is too clean-minded for success here. It refuses to steep womanhood in vice or immodesty, and cordially detests the wanton. Neither has it the blood instinct which accompanies the sensual in the Gallic and Spanish schools. Generally there is the possibility of a rake in a French saint (on canvas) and of a ruffian in an Iberian angel. Classical idealism is no more to its taste than painting "dirt" of any sort. It has no forced standard of beauty, scarcely considers it at all other than as the result of a body that digests well and hits hard. The strong point is natural truth. Whatever is seen it wishes distinctly shown. The public eye is the first organ to criticise, next the heart, lastly the brain.

English art is a good story-teller, dotes on children and pets, enjoys the picturesque, manly sports, horticulture, agriculture,

commerce, business, the crowd, isolation, vanities of fashion, follies of low life, virtues of every-day existence, the eccentricities of the world, and is more content with a "home" midway between poverty and riches than to be "decorated" and receive prize-medals. Solid comfort is dearer to it than "honorable mention." It prefers punctual bank-checks to distinguished back-patting; does not knuckle to patronage, yet adores it.

Superior to the copyist, it asserts itself as an illustrator and exhibitor; original in selection, varied and reputable; not inventive, but discursive, discovering; a wholesome art for the whole people; neither too abstruse, ideal, or allegorical for the common apprehension, nor too gross for cultivated taste; not yet aspiring to high historical and religious painting or profound thought, except in a few cases of but partial success or absolute failure. For a long while its chief ambition was to catch the smile of fashion. Now it earnestly seeks local truth and accurate characterization. Voluntarily it yields precedence to literature, satisfied with borrowing its creations, in place of creating thought-models for itself. The Bible as a source of inspiration pushes aside Homer, Virgil, and Dante, who, however, get compensation elsewhere. Scriptural subjects are sure of popular sympathy, while classical motives are certain to catch the cold shoulder. Minor things, to say the least, have as good a chance as great; I think better. Their soul is recognized, and thereby they are exalted, as much as Dutch art tends to belittle them by the variety of labor heaped on their crust. English art has its own cant, but does not often rush into absurd sensation, being kept clear by its shrewd detection of the ridiculous. The weakness goes to the opposite extreme of impassive decorum and rigid restraint. It overlooks the quiet saints of Protestant progress in favor of those who make the most uproar; but as a whole, English painting, planting itself firmly on the earth, specially devotes itself to Humanity.

*British coloring.*

Technically our satisfaction is less complete. It has no universal, acute feeling for color or large sense of harmony, being in this behind other schools. There is overmuch rawness, spottiness, flimsiness, and dryness of touch. The color-faculty seems to be as inoperative in the nation at large as that of music. This is noticeable in the prevailing inharmony, want of subtle gradation of tints, of skill in modelling, or the expression of character by it equally as by form, as with the Venetians and Spaniards, and the absence of that æsthetic tone which com-

pletes the unity of perfect painting. Color becomes blunt and jerked; like British speech, throaty, whereby words are dwarfed into imperfect sounds, and fluency and harmony choked. A single-eyed regard for the main idea is at the bottom of much of this inept practice of parts. But more arises from vicious methods and paucity of home-means of training the senses to a correct appreciation of colors. Further there is much careless execution, founded on the common make-shifts of ocular deception, or relying on the popular obtuseness not to be detected. Preraphaelitism, so called, was an earnest protest against the superficiality of the older men, and wrought a wholesome change in the standard of painting. It operated as a regenerating force, insisting on a more loyal treatment of nature and more honesty towards the spectator. Details and accessories were given their legitimate value in composition in the scale of fact. Like all reformers, however, the Preraphaelites were sometimes seduced by excessive zeal to push their practice to extreme limits, putting every object, without regard to the point of view or its relative importance, on the same level of elaborate finish and equality of representation, so that the spirit of the whole was in danger of being frittered away in minute parts. If the old men did too little, the new did too much, like Denner in portraiture, who makes the pores and texture of the skin more evident than the likeness. However it put the shirkers of labor out of fashion, and made conscientious work, if not wholly popular, at least respected, besides giving a severe blow to the stilted prestige of the average academicians.

With it grew up that beautiful branch of art, at first peculiar to the English, but now spreading everywhere, of water-color painting. To the remainder of the school it bears the same relation that lyric verse does to the rest of literature, or a people's songs to their affections. The style suits both a cultivated and common audience of ordinary poetical sensibilities. Its tone of color is on a higher key of light than is proper to oils. Not possessing their force, capacity, or dignity, it cannot supersede them in the more serious efforts of painting, though it has specific qualities and facilities that warrant the favor with which it has been received.

Having thus outlined the motives of English painting, let us look at some of the masters who represent its extremes of idea and treatment. It is not worth our while to go back to the Sir Peter Lely period of light portraiture, for no merely frivolous

style has any soundness of heart to consider, while his influence was as transient as the lives of the frail beauties who employed him. Æsthetic fashions come and go with the caprices of patrons and the servility of their painters. The vapid execution even of a Sir Thomas Lawrence has no interest except to his sitters.

It is otherwise with artists who refuse to toy with art to catch the fancies of the uninstructed rich man, or degrade it to a plaything of rank. Their works may be far below their ideal, yet lift the public taste to a higher level of artistic understanding at each effort to reach it. Genuine work is sure to incite genuine enjoyment finally. Now the British school, which was in type or sentiment genuinely national, begins, as was fitting, with artists who believed that the essence of painting was embryonic in color, and that their chief office was to bring its power to the surface; form being the skeleton, and color the quickening breath, as was the conviction of the Venetians. If their success fell short of their ambition, it was because the standard of excellence left by Titian in painting, like that of Phidias in sculpture, is so close upon the subtlety of nature's own modelling that only a genius especially endowed of her may hope to rival him.

Real progress commences when the inferior master perceives in the greater that superiority which he covets. Copying may help his practice and instruct him in theory, but it cannot bestow the cunning of hand that marks quite as distinctly the gulf that separates genius from talent as does thought itself. *Reynolds.* Reynolds, believing in Titian, became a colorist. But not having the power to express all he conceived, and failing to detect by chemical tests, as those do who thus seek it, the secret of Venetian vitality of coloring, he groped his life away in shortcomings, though not without executing works which have been useful in helping reclaim the British public from its general insensibility to color. So deeply did Sir Joshua feel this barrenness that he said despairingly, "There is not a man on earth who has the least notion of coloring." Again, "It is totally lost to art." He was right in his esteem for it and estimate of the prevailing ignorance throughout Europe, but wrong in supposing that a lost art could be renewed by means of chemistry and manual dexterity alone. He would have done sounder work if he had not lost time chasing an *ignis fatui*, a mistake common to small artists, though not to be regretted in them as with one competent to do better things.

In view of the consummate modelling of color in Titian's "Venus," portraits of Canaro and the gray-eyed unknown man of the Pitti, not to cite other wonders, it is not surprising that impressible artists of no original force, like the American landscapist Tilten, should theorize themselves into a maze of manual blunders in the search of effects as hopelessly beyond their powers as the plays of Shakespeare, or the creation of woman herself. Most artists know something theoretically of former methods, but are skilful only in the particular one taught them or which they work out for themselves. The Greeks knew the value of glazings two thousand years before the Venetians wrought them into their transparent glow of harmony, or Correggio into his glowing light. Pliny says that Apelles, having finished a picture to a certain point, poured on it a liquid which gave brilliancy and toned down the strong hues. Evidently he knew the modern receipt for lowering their pitch.

It is the charitable fashion to attribute the want of success of the imitators of the great masters to some technical mistake, as that their oils were faulty, colors impure, or they put transparent tints over opaque before these were dry, which absorb the former. Some of Leonardo's pictures have suffered on account of their black foundation showing through the superimposed half-tints and darkening the shadows. But who fails to recognize the hand and thought of genius, despite the drawbacks of time and chemical changes? If Reynolds could not recreate Venetian in English painting, or William Page in American, it was not owing to vicious methods only. When England and America give birth to original genius on a par with the "old masters," we shall have art equal to theirs. Meantime, let either nation cultivate such talent as it has in its natural direction.

*Gainsborough.* Gainsborough doing this, attained a clearness and delicate gradation of tint that surpasses his rival's, besides being more English in motives and style. Still, a "Holy Family" by Reynolds is an English mother of the common type of features and costume, of the upper class, with a fine boy overshadowed by British foliage. It was as affected in him to miscall his theme, as it was indecent in Rubens to make coarse moulded women and wickedness in high places into effigies of divine personages. The English artist, however, never wounds the moral sensibility by his anachronisms, but the continental shocks propriety and history alike. A respectable mother fondling her child, whether called a Madonna or Mrs. Blank, is always a

pleasing spectacle, but no grandiloquence of titles or wealth of jewels can bring the mind to accept the lineaments of a well-known sinner for those of an immaculate Virgin. English art often disappoints in execution, but its morality is certain to be at the highest gauge of the nation's.

Another pleasing feature of British colorists, including Wilson, is their refinement. Their æsthetic tone is superior to that which came into vogue with the sturdy realism of the next generation, which introduced into art more of the ruder elements of life, to the detriment of the older idealism of character and scenes. Although Reynolds had no better subjects to paint than his successors, his portraits will always be valuable because of their high-bred grace and dignity.

More striking contrasts, in the scope of motives and treatment, obtain in England than is usual in the schools of the continent. Hogarth is supremely English. No other land could have bred him. He is the climax of its insular morality and anti-æsthetic mind, scorning foreign art, habits, and idealisms, a Spurgeon of the brush, realistic to the spine, not for dirt's sake, but having an ethical aim that savors more of the puritan pulpit than the palette, and a sharp satire that cuts into shams as a surgeon's knife into tumors. A strong man with a strong purpose, he seizes on painting as the most handy mirror in which to reflect the manners, vices, and misery of his generation in a series of unique pictures, unsurpassed in incisive delineation of character. No old rules for him. He draws and colors by his own formula. The intensity of his art springs from its truth. Hogarth is the typical Englishman who will wash his dirty clothes in public. What cares he how fetid are the sores he strips of their dirty rags, if but healthy air be let on to them. Virtue with him is a materialistic dame just as vice is physically horrible. He distributes reward and punishment in a substantial manner, according to the average Protestant notions of what honesty or dishonesty, truth or falsehood ought to lead to on earth, only they often do not.

*Hogarth*

Hogarth is the Nemesis of mob-vice and fashionable sin, relentless to both. What would not one give to have as realistic a series of paintings from life in Babylon when Daniel read its fate on the wall; in Memphis, when Moses was set adrift on the Nile; in Jerusalem, when Jesus was martyred; or in the Rome of the Cæsars, as Hogarth has given of the London of the Georges: pictures which intensify in interest as

civilization advances. A Gaul dealing with similar facts confuses the naked truth with his *spirituel* fancies and delight in the decorative or sensational. He has not in him the wholesome faculty of truthful caricature. He must exaggerate himself or nation, because glory is the dearest wish of his heart. Hogarth looks the home-devil out of countenance with his unflinching gaze. What business has he with theories of transmitted wretchedness and official do-everything or do-nothingness? If the reputation of England is bloated he will prick it. Here is the sin and the sinner so brought forward that you cannot give them the go-by on the opposite side. An English brother and sister, each wretch exactly what England has grown on its proper soil, a fire from hell burning away the frail props of political and social respectability. "Up! O Englishmen," shouts Hogarth; "put it out ship-shape, or be irretrievably damned."

Plain, practical preaching of the brush this, such as is seldom put before human eyes! If more had been given to art as art, the intense realism of the compositions would have been weakened. Now we must see what Hogarth saw, and from his point of view. He has conferred honor on genius by giving it the noble mission of calling the "lost" to repent. In general, genius prefers the society of the "saved," reversing the example of the "Son of God." If we look in Hogarth only for that beauty which is the music of the eye, we may turn away disgusted; for as grapes refuse to grow on brambles, so æsthetic repose is not the companion of crime, nor is sensuous delight the handmaiden of gin-consoled poverty.

The stern realism of Hogarth partakes too much of an appeal to conscience to be popular as art, although his humor mitigates his unpalatable revelations. A favorite realism of English people is one which gives a prosaic representation of current incidents, as for instance, the "Derby Day," and "Railway Station of Frith;" coarse, forcible pictures, devoid of æsthetic feeling alike in composition and color, but entertaining as matter of fact spectacles of certain phases of life in the bustling British hive. Being the chosen art of the crowd, it is the best paid of all, and applauded the loudest; whereas it bears no nearer relation to fine art than an ordinary novel does to fine literature. Yet it is more advantageous for the multitude to possess what they like and comprehend, as a basis of training their taste, than to have their minds perplexed by the more ambitious eclecticisms of the Sir Benjamin West class, which require reference to books to be

intelligible, or to be disappointed in their notions of art itself by the frantic efforts of a Hayden to clutch the academic transcendental.

It is to the credit of the English school that it produces so many well-instructed artists inspired by motives suited to the comprehension of all persons, and yet in moral tone salutary, stimulating to the intellect, and pleasing in an æsthetic sense. Landseer's devotion to animals, though his work has too much of a surface look, is in keeping with the public feeling. His pencil is more humane than that of the Dutchman Sneyders, whose broader brush revels chiefly in the ferocious instincts of brutes and the bloody trophies of the chase. Landseer keeps uppermost the bracing effects of hunting as an out-door exercise on the hunter, and the keen development of his physical senses as he copes with the sharp instincts of his game, while his triumph is not in a cruel death of overmatched victims, which continental painters of animal life depict with profound satisfaction, but in overcoming physical difficulties, in daring pursuit, and in the hardihood gained by an invigorating pleasure. Our feelings are not lacerated by needless parading of torn limbs and gory mouths. Instead, a healthful sympathy is incited by the courageous attack or defence which puts the instinctive faculties to their highest test, before the fatal moment arrives; or admiring pity at the resignation with which, the animal having exhausted his resources of escape, confronts his destiny, pathetically rebuking man for his wantonness.

The English painter loves man and animal too sincerely to put either on the rack. Furthermore he is the court-painter of dogs and horses, evidently preferring to see them sharing the luxuries and pride of station of their aristocratic owners, with a seemingly latent idea of an equality of souls in his two and four-footed patrons; at least of intimate affinities which exalt the dumb if they do not the speaking animal, though in his hands they never debase the human being. No one of common sensibilities can fail of being favorably impressed in regard to dependent brutes by Landseer's portraiture of them.

*Wilkie. Leslie. Leech. "Punch."*

Higher up in æsthetic range and the development of character we find two representative painters of the genre-historical style, each a type of substantial British idiosyncrasies of temperament: Wilkie and Leslie, the one Scotch and the other American born, but true English artists in selection and execution. Wilkie had a rich fund of that humor

which honors and amuses humanity: a quiet, racy, tender, truthful picturesque method of composition, harmonious as a whole while abounding in delicate by-play; not masterly but agreeable in color, faithful throughout in work, sincere at heart, and clear-headed. Honest Wilkie!

Leslie had more culture, but a narrower understanding and more contracted heart. He was not a genius, like Wilkie. His coloring is an offence to painting, deficient in harmony, unity, tone, and meaning. It concentrates the worst faults of his school. There are men who paint even worse because knowing less, not for feeling less. Leslie's coloring may be locally true, but as used by him, becomes cold, coarse, and heavy, disturbing that refined unity of characterization and composition which was his strong point. In taste and sympathies he was kindly aristocratic, not recognizing the people of his generation, as did Wilkie, nor yet offending them. His is a limited, high-toned well-informed manner, suited to the drawing-rooms of the instructed classes who care more for art as a literary than an æsthetic enjoyment. Wilkie painted for a numerous, Leslie for an exclusive circle.

Although Leech was not a painter, he represents one of the most welcome and deepest ingrained phases of British art, founded on the national perception of the ultra-ridiculous and fallacious. He was most clever in making caricature a vital detective force, exposing humbug, scenting mischief, and presenting the truth to popular apprehension in a ludicrous, wholesome way, carrying conviction to head and heart quickly and pleasantly. The branch of art of which he was chief master, answers as a pictorial conscience for the nation, reflecting its immediate impressions of good or bad of themselves and others; in the main with fairness and common sense. Its blisterings excite the healthful action in the public skin, though sometimes it runs into uncharitableness and thoughtlessness out of haste to joke. Yet it is never malignant, immoral, or irreligious, and as free from actual cant as anything human may be just now. It has originated a singularly trenchant and graphic style of design, broad in manner, pointed in detail, free from senseless exaggeration, which as in French caricature overshoots its mark, quick in seizing the roots of character, sharp as lightning in application, of large and minute observation, sleight of hand, which constant study and practice alone can keep up, and a skill in sugaring its bitterest pills with enough of fun to reconcile even its butts to

them; indeed, to make its heaviest home-thrusts valued as evidence of high-game, for it loves better to strike upwards than downwards.

"Punch" is as thoroughly a British product as Hogarth. Italian caricature is inventive and excoriating; careless in design, vehement and ingenious, excessively irreligious, making as free use of the figures of the Holy Trinity as of pope or emperor, to point its shafts. Devoted to political propagandism, in which it is very effective, it conveys and defines ideas to the populace by aid of the ridiculous, with a rapidity and emphasis that books cannot rival. The most hopeful, original art-talent of Italy now takes this direction, as the sole one sustained by the common mind, or for which it has a hearty liking. But its use is confined to the exigencies of politics, while the caricature of England, taking in all the globe, overlooks no topic of interest to humanity at large.

What emphatically distinguishes it is respect of woman. She is as fair game in the ordinary course of her eccentricities and follies as the common Englishman for snobbery or both for obesity or stupidity; but her chastity and the domestic relations are never trifled with or sneered at. "Punch's" familiar English virgin is an ever delightful picture of youth, health, beauty, and goodness. Her mother is the respected matron and faithful wife that she ought ever to be. That tenderness for the erring and fallen, which comes of Christian pity and desire of their redemption, beautifully sung by Hood, is likewise a vital characteristic of British morality in art. It is praiseworthy in the nation to sustain "Punch"; nobler, that its ethical standard is thus pure and independent. France would not tolerate the latter even if it had talent equal to the former. Neither would America in the present despotism of public opinion, outside of politics and impatience of sound criticism, though its regard for women and standard of domestic morality are quite equal to the English, perhaps a mite higher.

*Blake.*

One artist stands alone, an exceptional man at any period, but the more remarkable as coming to light in the English school, against whose materialistic tendencies he was a spiritual protest, as he was an enigma to the nation. By his contemporaries he was called the "mad" painter. But was William Blake more mad than Milton, whose verse records visions akin to those the artist drew? Are his extraordinary creations the fruit of a disturbed imagination, or the orderly

sequence of a rare gift of spiritual insight? Blake looked into worlds unnoted by the outward eye. His vision was not complete or thorough. None earthly may be; but it was approximative; revealing glimpses of scenes of too intense grandeur and beauty to be apprehended by mortals unless partially veiled in that imperfection which is our common heritage while in the body, or given as faint suggestions of celestial truths. Ezekiel, Isaiah, John of Patmos, Dante, Milton, Swedenborg, all the great utterers of spiritual knowledge, have an advantage over their fellow-seers who rely on plastic and pictorial means to embody their discoveries. Neither Phidias, nor Fra Angelico, succeed in forming out of the concrete so perfect an image of what is in their souls as can the prophet and poet of theirs out of the abstract. Matter is refractory, while the latter is a spiritual process appealing directly to kindred senses for interpretation, or the completion of what the imagination outlines. We should therefore always remember in favor of the artist his specific disadvantage in any effort to render the super-excellent. Words paint sublimity better than colors, for the receiving thought itself is illimitable, while the external organs are limited by their own and the objective matter. Great artists see mentally as far as great poets, only their medium of expression is less subtle and manageable.

The reverse holds good in ordinary art. A common picture of common events conveys to the beholder a definite idea or sight quicker, more completely and pleasurably than does the printed description, since it is merely an affair of the eye, without call on the imagination. Hence as the vast majority of people judge of pictures by their skins, they think an eye-painter like Frith is a prodigious artist, while a soul-painter like Blake must be foolish or crazy. And their judgment is the more emphatic if the drawing and coloring of the unintelligible artist has not the superficial likeness to nature of his rival.

Blake certainly indulges in wayward freaks of composition, and displays marked defects or recklessness of design. But even these seem to have a purpose and meaning clear to him if not to others; as likewise his system of coloring. One of the oldest and most accomplished of living English artists, who in his youth knew Blake well, and saw a large painting of his of a Welsh historical subject treated ideally, but not then finished, says it was as remarkable for force of coloring and the quality of its composition and design as for its originality of thought.

What became of this immense canvas he never knew. Fuseli told Blake with truth, when he came to the Academy to learn, that he was better qualified to teach them.

Blake's disparaging critics overlook an important point. The supernal has no tangible model; and in such instances, the artist not only must make his own law, but by the nature of his motive his hand is the insufficient tool of his idea. Michael Angelo swayed to and fro between his power of hand and force of thought. Whenever the former got loose rein it led him into anatomical extravagances of composition, whereas the latter, however incomplete in manual realization, magnetizes the spectator by its inherent greatness of conception. Felix told Paul that much learning had made him mad. All insight into highest truth meets with similar accusation before the current mind rises to its level. This happened to Blake, aggravated by his independence of the world and occasional artistic carelessness or incoherency.

Nevertheless Blake is a unique master of the spiritual-sublime — a creative artist-poet of remarkable originality. He alone would serve to redeem the English school from its reproach of overweening materialism and deficiency of exalted motive. As its spiritual faculties become developed, Blake's fame rises and his inspirations are better appreciated. In view of the results they were better termed revelations. All prophetic revelation stammers as it passes human lips. It reaches us in Orphic fragments, susceptible of varied construction, leaving gaps difficult to fill, yet on the whole ennobling and inspiriting. Whatever originates in the world of spirits must come to us in this imperfect guise whilst material barriers intervene.

Blake's place in art is the antipodal extreme to Hogarth's. He revealed the frightful secrets of earth's hells as a warning. Blake let in light from the heavens to console, and opened to mortal eyes vistas of happier homes beyond the grave. Had he been a Catholic, his mind would have been preoccupied by a defined mythology which would have governed his pencil. But born where the boundaries of religious thought are less fixed, he rose to heights and penetrated to depths before unknown to his school. He was the first to graphically embody the consoling truth of the immediate resurrection of the soul, which although exemplified by Jesus, seems never to have been generally comprehended by Christians. I refer to his sublime composition of the corruptible putting on incorruption, in the form of

decrepit age tottering on crutches into the tomb, reluctant to enter, but the next instant seen as a perfect spiritual being in the figure of immortal youth rising from the top of the sepulchre, gazing upwards in rapture at the celestial light that electrifies his new-found existence.

What art before or since has been so transfigured by the dearest of all divine truths to humanity? What we feign would believe here bursts on our consciousness as a beneficent law of nature taking out that "sting of death" which before Blake art heightened rather than assuaged. Regard, too, in the illustrations of the "Grave," how beautifully he shows the release by death of the soul from the body: its brief moment of amazement and curiosity at a glorious unexpected change, its notions having been obscured or falsified while on earth; the preliminary experiences of new-birth and final joy at rejoining friends in a land whose mansions though many and lovely are not constructed or distributed after the unequal ways of earth.

*Gilchrist's "Life of Blake," vol. i., p. 30 et seq.*

By artistic clairvoyance like the above, Blake opens to the human heart fresh fountains of hope. The illustrations of Job best evince his range and power of the sublime. He says of himself, "I do not behold the outward creation, and that to me is an hindrance and not action." "All things exist in the human imagination." And again, "Mere natural objects always did and do weaken, deaden, and obliterate imagination in me." When ten years old, he sees "a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars," and meets angelic figures walking amid the haymakers at work in the fields he frequented. How unlike Raphael's and Leonardo's theories and practice in relation to their ideals! They studied natural objects with cool heads and clear eyes, content to find their models in living men and women and the creation around them. Blake virtually despised them all. The core of his philosophy of art ran through an imagination more sublimated in a spiritual sense than ever before was given to a painter. Material things did not exist to him when the inspiration was on him. "Instead of the sun, a round disk of fire, I see an innumerable company of the heavenly hosts crying, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty." Further he adds, "I question not my corporeal eye any more than I would a window on seeing a spirit." To appreciate his art we must go to him to learn its informing motives, for any less a guide would lead astray. That becomes intelligible

which otherwise might be regarded as a mystic craze. We are prepared to see Blake design the Almighty as if, like Job himself, he had seen Him riding on the whirlwind which covers the Lord as with a mantle of wrath. There is an imaginative probability to his conception that reconciles the mind to the attempt to incarnate the Unrepresentable. His "Ancient of Days" is more majestic, grave, *old* in the light of venerable authority, than the mediæval effigies; far more realizing the spiritual constitution, strictly subordinating to it the external form of a Being, who appears actually as the centre of light and life of all things. Then, too, how human He seems, as if comprehending and feeling all that man suffers and enjoys. See how mournful God looks, as if half repenting Him of his inscrutable purpose in commissioning Satan to vex Job. He even pities Satan as He casts him headlong into the pit; but the angels rejoice at being rid of their arch-enemy, who *falls* in a sheet of flame as only Blake could make a fiend fall.

With what fatherly love God blesses Job, in the end triumphant over his tormentor. Note the general resemblance between their figures! Blake not only sees that man was created in his Maker's image, but attaches a peculiarly subtile spiritual meaning to the likeness, as if Job impersonified the God in man on earth, and his victory was that of the eternal right which made them one forever, blessed evermore.

What terrible repose in the "Spirit" that made Job's hair stand on end as it passed like a vapor before him, glorifying the firmament and dazzling the mountain summits with an effulgence which turns the light of the sun into blackness. Clairvoyants describe spirits as Blake depicts them, with rays of light or color coming from them and forming an atmosphere in which they move and by which their nature is disclosed. Those beautiful supernal beings, which represent the Sons of God, and the Morning Stars in the highest empyrean, shouting for joy, are as exquisitely as originally conceived in this incorporeal but yet not formless manner. None other ever so majestically and so substantially brought down to human ideas by symbolic creation, the essences of the divine forces that surround and uphold the great white throne.

The Book of Job lifts Blake far above the mundane standard of men and things. His types are stupendously real nevertheless, devoid of coarse exaggerations of physical attributes, supernal characterizations of the sublimest invention, vitalized by

a dramatic power of mind and hand as wonderful as new in art; and which fits equally well men and spirits. What cowering fear affects the wicked; what profound sorrow and humility the mournful! Seeing, as it were, passions and emotions, he invests them in forms that disclose their deepest natures. The angels *shrink* from Satan who comes into their midst; for he is the evil force, not incarnated ugliness, but grand in stature, physical strength, and sinful ambition, — a *dark* Son of the Morning; demoniacal in attributes rather than figure, which is muscular, swarthy, and natural; the evil being internal and reflected through the external, not changing its original heroic outline. There is nothing of the vulgar, gloating, sensual diabolism of the ordinary nature of the Devil in Blake's creation, which is a truly conceived infernal potency in the likeness of man-evil, as the Saviour is of the man made spiritually perfect.

Perhaps the grandest example of Blake's sublimity, is the plate representing "Satan going out from the presence of God to afflict Job." There is a disturbed concentric spasm of the heavenly hosts like the swing of a universe trembling on the brink of an awful catyclysm, but held in secure check by the central Almighty repose, which contrasts marvellously with the astonishment and forebodings of the Sons of God, whose graceful, rapid movements are in no less striking contrast to the supernatural velocity of Satan as he exultingly descends head foremost amid smoke and flame to the earth. Although his figure is only one inch long it embodies more colossal grandeur than the tallest Italian fresco of man or devil. Raphael's "Ezekiel" is child's play in sublimity beside the best of his tiny compositions, which bring together in artistic unity the powers of heaven, earth, and hell, in a few square inches.

Vehement action would seem to be Blake's chief success, if one did not regard with great attention those designs in which the lyric takes the place of the epic movement. With what quiet simplicity and naturalness Job's happiness and prosperity, before and after his suffering, are delineated; no self-congratulation on account of wealth or position, but the devout humble worshipper, the repose of true piety, being the law of the great man. The mystic grandeur of the colored design of the "Crucifixion" displays his capacity of effecting much by sparse means. It has a Rembrandtish emphasis of light and shadow, joined to purity of design and sentiment foreign to the Dutchman. The infinite sweetness, tenderness, and spirituality

of Blake are more especially discernible in his "Songs." Of his strange, visionary portraiture I need not speak, as they have no direct connection with his real merits, as shown in the works already cited.

*The new English school.*

There is a class of English artists who occupy an intermediate position between the common realists and those of absolute genius like Hogarth, Blake, and Turner; men of sound English morality in choice and treatment. They exhibit cultivated taste, independent judgment, original invention, refined feeling, poetical sentiment, and an intellectual vision keen and broad. Nor are their technical virtues less noticeable. Industry, enterprise, patient elaboration, thorough study of their motives, a profound regard for art itself theoretically and practically, having an æsthetic conscience; all these are conspicuous traits. Whatever culture, talent, and ardor may accomplish, they aspire to do. As in literature there are writers who strive to perpetuate a purity and excellence of style derived from the classics of their country, and yet admit legitimate innovation, so in painting, the artists to whom I now refer endeavor to incorporate whatever is meritorious and useful of old methods into modern practice, in subjection to the current taste and ideas. Their contempt of superficial training, willingness to learn from all sources, and fearlessness of experiment, give them an initiative in art-progress, so that while representing the growth of æsthetic knowledge they in large measure also lead and direct it. Still I cannot perceive that there exists in England any extensive, intelligent enjoyment of art. The multitude are ignorant of its intellectual functions, and have no sufficient opportunity to train their senses to catch its more fleeting pleasures. On this point, man for man, England has not much to boast over America. But she has provided a foundation for progress in a class of able artist-scholars, who keep alive æsthetic traditions and principles, and numerous, wealthy patrons disposed to overpay in their competitive eagerness to secure favorite works, more perhaps from associations of a refined, fireside luxury in possessing them as objects which can never become cheap and common, than from an enlightened appreciation of art itself. Like the kindred cultivation of literature as an unfailing source of happiness expanding by exercise, a liberal comprehension of art must long remain the exalted privilege of a few. There is however no impediment in free countries to the spread of art-culture except that callousness of feeling which comes from inattention. Its claims are slowly

making themselves felt through the obvious advantages which are seen to accrue to national civilization everywhere in enlarging and refining the popular means of happiness. Without unduly exalting the wholesome influences of this younger school, it seems to me to have more vigor, instruction, and better methods than its immediate predecessor; not only seeing with more accuracy but keeping to a higher standard of æsthetic faith.

Unfortunately for their fame and the world's benefit, the painters of England are bound to their own island by golden chains. Even there, it is difficult to see their best works collectively, owing to the restrictions of private ownership. American amateurs would do a salutary thing were they to temper their eagerness for French subjects with the wholesomer motives and more sincere treatment of English painters. Millais, Holman and William Hunt, D. Rosetti, and Leighton, to name but few, deserve to be better known abroad. They paint brilliantly and with signal ability and versatility. Their training is robust, their choice alike free from the commonplace, and the transcendent-ideal or conventional grand, while their treatment both of great or little motives, whether altogether to our fancy or not, begets respect for its honesty and acuteness. They have greatly widened and deepened the range of English painting, introducing a truer realism and more profound theories of æsthetics. If they have less humor and satire than some of the older men, their perception is more delicate, science truer, and feeling more sensitive; in fine, they have created a superior atmosphere for English painting.

*Millais, Holman Hunt, D. Rosetti.*

Millais, Holman Hunt, and Dante Rosetti were the originators and "forlorn hope" of this renovating movement, which they made successful as much by sheer pluck, perseverance, and consistency as by a high view of art itself and indomitable talent; returning year after year in the Academy exhibitions with their accurately executed and carefully considered pictures, until they overcame prejudices and took by storm the position of the older painters in the estimation of critics. Their long-deferred success was as sudden as complete. There may be different judgments as to the relative merits of Millais and Hunt, but that they are conscientious masters of rare ability and great knowledge none can dispute. The "Sower of the Seed" of the former is an impressive composition of profound æsthetic as well as moral meaning; a serious thought put into serious coloring and suggestive design of prodigious force. Hunt,

in his chief work, "The Finding in the Temple," inclines more to the picturesque-historical on a strictly realistic platform of art than to the profoundly emotional, bringing the scene in its matter-of-fact probability before us, like a brilliantly told narrative; but his "Light of the World" shows an equal love of the picturesque symbolical. The range of their fancy and motives is as wide as their general cultivation and acute observation. Any type they select is certain to be well treated in relation to itself as art, and not for hasty gains and transient sensations. They keep in mind that the main office of a painter is to paint, teaching being secondary. This rigid adherence to the first principle of æsthetics, joined to a high-minded comprehension of the moral and intellectual aspects of art, imparts to the English school of which they are the acknowledged chiefs, a more elevated, if somewhat restricted, character than elsewhere obtains. Much is also due to the generous faith of these rivals in each other. The history of art, alas, has more to say of petty jealousies and vindictive malice than of paternal kindness in cases of strong competition, ending sometimes in the malicious destruction of the obnoxious works and the murder of the offending artist himself, as the records of the Neapolitan school disclose. It is delightful, therefore, to be able to relate an act of these masters which honors them and their profession equally. Their fortunes at one period seemed so desperate that both talked of abandoning art lest they should starve. But Millais soon after meeting with a little encouragement, said to Hunt, "You must not give up; you have before you a great future; if you need money, share mine;" which Hunt did for one year, when Millais' words were so verified that Hunt in one week had sold every picture he had painted during years of unrequited toil, received commissions sufficient to occupy him for several more, and at one bound found himself famous and prosperous. His father from the first had opposed his becoming an artist because he thought the tendency of the profession was immoral and vagabondizing.

One of the most ambitious of recent easel paintings is the "Florentine Procession," by Mrs. Benham Hay, representing the well-known episode in the career of Savonarola, A. D. 1489, when the children of Florence, incited by his preaching, went from house to house demanding that meretricious objects of art should be given up to them to be publicly burned. Mrs. Hay has produced a striking picture on a large scale, of sufficient merit to prove that a woman of talent who accepts for herself

the same severe discipline in art as a man, may approach him in technical results. Comparatively few men do better work. The architecture is good in tone, true in quality, and correct in design. Her figures are dramatically individualistic, and elaborately finished, without littleness. Foreground details and the varied accessories evince a bold touch, an observant eye for local truths, and considerable skill in giving material qualities, textures, and functions. There is a prevailing sense of space, solidity, weight, distance, general effect, and particular action. It composes picturesquely, and evinces thought and invention. As an ambitious attempt at historical painting, the picture marks an era in woman's art. Unhappily it is neither completely realistic nor idealistic. Aiming at giving an actual historical incident, it goes part way in that direction, then abruptly passes into the typical and symbolical. Local architecture, including the Baptistery, part of Giotto's Campanile and the opposite Loggia, is well rendered. Some of the Florentine portraiture and costumes seem inspired by the frescoes of D. Ghirlandajo. Then we are taken back a century and more to defunct fashions, but these may be admitted as masquerading of the moment, were not their extravagant and rich effects, and the coarse, more Northern than Italian features of the scoffing spectators, opposed to symbolical draperies and figures of the Fra Angelico type, without his power of spiritualization. Allegory, realism, and an abortive attempt at refined idealism and intense spirituality are thus confounded to the loss of intellectual and technical unity. There are also sundry anachronisms of styles of the art-objects collected and carried by the children, some things antedating the event, and others only in existence at a later period, especially the *rococo* "Venus" and its frame, and the bronze satyr, and a portion of the rich stuffs and jewelry. The children, too, instead of being carried away by the excitement of their fanatical enterprise, are impressed by conflicting emotions. Some hesitate and evidently contemplate the coming holocaust with reluctant eyes. Halfway feelings have no place in fanaticisms of any sort. This want of unity of treatment of the central idea produces an æsthetic jar, which is increased by the failure of the painting to respond to its title. There are too few principals or spectators for a procession, particularly at Florence, where the slightest cause calls together an idle crowd as if they dropped from the skies. I have counted ten men watching an eleventh buy two oranges from a street-huckster. Savonarola kept Florence in

perpetual turmoil. This scene in particular aroused the attention of the whole city. Mrs. Hay, therefore, in treating it, should have kept it consistent throughout to one phase, whether historical, typical, or ideal. Now we are perplexed by several intellectual points of view, none of them complete. Her idea is intelligible after we know the story and motive consistent, but as history the painting is not exact, nor is it artistically correct and harmonious.

The chief mistake is the introduction of the tri-colored awning which prolongs the picture disagreeably, makes the foreground figures look awkwardly long, mars the aerial perspective, could not have been true in itself, impairs the painting every way, especially in its proportions and distance, and is uncalled for in the scene, such awning being put out only to screen the Holy Sacrament in the great festivals of the Church. There is a want of flow of movement in all the figures, and mastery of form and action; a heaviness of outline, detracting from the in general tolerable modelling and drapery. Mrs. Hay displays skill in the management of color, avoiding offensive glare, and toning down the redundant white. But the pitch of light in the foreground and mid-distance is too strong in itself, and does not unite well with the softer, subdued tone of a background, not as remote as it would seem to be here. Too much stress is put on details which, although showing cleverness of studio practice, disturbs the general mass. Further, the spectator can divide the composition into a dozen separate pictures of groups, each one gaining by being alone, and the whole not suffering by the subtraction. I have been the more particular in naming the defects of treatment because they are such as Mrs. Hay may obviate if she means to continue to try to prove the capacity of her sex to win the rank of "master" in painting.

*Turner.*

It is comparatively easy to criticise talent, for its tendency is to orderly shape and classification. Talents group into families. Genius stands apart. But this isolation is one element of its greatness. Whatever be the cause, there is something inexpressibly mournful in that reserve which forbids human communion. Yet the solitude of Jeremiah, Dante, and Michael Angelo, was the result of their intense yearning to ennoble humanity. Such men stand out in the darkness of nations, like light-houses irradiating gloom and flashing warning on sea-slime and breakers. They love their species overmuch, not too little. Nevertheless there are rare men through

whom we receive precious foregleams of divine beauty and hints of immortal truths, but whose moral consciousness is of a very different quality. Some men are grossly earthy, gritty, factious, spitting contempt on fellow-beings instead of being stirred by an infinite compassion to guide them into higher ways of life. No savageness of egotism, satire, or coarse instincts of the flesh can utterly pervert genius. Though it fail in its own salvation, it is not permitted to it to wholly shirk its obligations to the world. Blake's visions of a nobler existence than the present caused him to be indifferent to ordinary mundane satisfactions and inspired him to work miracles in art. The joy and independence which his faith fostered were incomprehensible to those whose horizon of enjoyment was bounded by material things. An incapacity of a higher belief is the saddest event that can happen to any man; a tenfold sadness to genius: more fatal to contentment than the mournfulness born of want of faith in humanity in mass, for no evil can equal that of disbelief in own one's soul. Believing in his, Blake's spirit was invulnerable to poverty or neglect. Turner disbelieving, insensible to religious hope, dreading the logical annihilation of his cheerless materialism, that awful phantom of eternal nothingness which stalked before his reason, devoted his powers to accumulating fortune. Gaining it, he grew only the more solitary and imbittered. At his death, greedy, neglectful relatives contrived to filch it from the chief purpose of his long toil and privation. If there could have come to him in the grave one additional pang of unhappiness, this was it.

It is wholesome to contrast the interior lives of Blake and Turner. By so doing, we shall better estimate the importance of faith to men of genius and indirectly from their example to us. In the world's judgment, Blake was the more unappreciated and disappointed of the two. He had scarcely a taste of that intellectual recognition which is as precious to the humble as the proud. Few comprehended or cared for his works or words; none besides his lowly wife, for his habits or his visions. Of money, patronage, fame, in one word success, he had next to nothing. Keenly sensitive to sympathy and encouragement, he kept himself as pure and unworldly in spirit as a little child. "I live in a hole here, but God has a beautiful mansion for me, elsewhere." "Lawrence pities me, but 'tis he, and the prosperous artists like him, that are the just objects of pity. I pos-

sess my visions, and peace. They have bartered their birthright for a mess of pottage." To a friend he says, "May God make this world to you as beautiful as it has been to me."

Would you exchange the spiritual riches of Blake for the heavy guineas of Turner?

As an artist he is to be approached with diffidence; for it is as difficult to adequately understand as to copy him. Yet the oftener one goes to his works, as to nature herself, the more profound the revelation. Turner believed in the landscape. It was his *alpha* and *omega* of a world. But his intercourse made him unhappy, because his eyes must in a few years close on it forever. Beyond nature, there was that portentous eclipse which shut out heaven from his soul. Consequently he concentrated on what his eyesight took in, the extraordinary powers of his imagination and observation, with a degree of success that entitles him to be called the one complete master of landscape.

Others have had special successes. They have excelled in certain phases or qualities and been content therewith. But Turner was the first to raise landscape art out of the partial, common, or conventional, on to the same complete, sympathetic basis of truthful treatment as the human figure, imparting to it a variety of expression, and profundity of feeling commensurate, so far as art vehicles permit, with its divinely derived functions. Before him great artists had treated landscape in a great manner, but with them all it was a secondary motive. I speak of Titian, Correggio, Rubens, Velasquez, Rembrandt. The lesser landscapists, Claude, Rosa, Domenichino, Albano, Poussins, and men of their calibre, though skilful in rendering separate features or details, were never imbued with its real spirit, or observed it closely and surely. They were eclectics, idealists more intent on creating a landscape according to their notions of what it should be, or subjected to a central motive foreign to itself, than if studying nature from the only legitimate point of view, as the ancients studied the human figure, from actual life. Dutchmen and Germans had painted clever pictures of local effects and familiar scenes, but seemed more ambitious of fine finish and mechanical dexterity than of a comprehensive view of their subject. Theirs was an eye-service no way truer of heart than the common run of lip responses in religion. Now Turner did not profess to see God in anything; talked not even about the landscape; but he

silently and solitarily threw himself bodily into it. By sheer force of native sympathy with his motive he steered clear of the entanglements, shortcomings, and contracted ideas of the old men, and after mastering all they knew, got to interpenetrate its moods and catch its likeness, as if it had a soul of its own whereby to reflect the purposes of its author.

I do not think that Turner had any spiritual consciousness of this, because without a religious sense this is impossible. It was the instinctive sagacity of genius, after he had consecrated himself to nature, that gave him the clue to her secrets, and drew him into close communion with phenomena heretofore unobserved by art. Turner was as much of a hermit in his way as most of the old mystics, only instead of tying himself to a rock in a wilderness and looking inwardly on a cramped soul, he went to and fro, untraceable and unknown, over the earth, companionless, with his eyes searching everywhere for the material truth and beauty of creation. How could nature refuse its confidence to one who so unreservedly gave his life to her. Assuredly it was a serious misfortune to his soul not to have been led by its agency into a spiritual comprehension of its being. But his eyesight was none the less keen, or hand less dexterous, at stopping short of this revelation. His unrivalled faculties of observation were directed to effects, not causes, while his memory and imagination, developed and disciplined in the phenomenal school of nature, his brush gaining skill as he detected her ways, enabled him to repeat her facts in infinite detail, and to vary or compose them anew with vital force and suggestiveness.

The æsthetic successes and failures of Turner come from the same deep causes of will, and are analogous to the extravagances of anatomical compositions of Michael Angelo. The Englishman was as imperious over color as the Italian over form. He wished to enslave it to his caprices and fancy. There is something sublime in his conceptions of the latent forces and meaning of colors. He refused to believe that they could be reduced to scientific law. His daring experiments either affronted the men of rule or were offensive enigmas to the crowd. Turner flung color into his canvas with a volcanic brush, bent on resolving ideas or creating forms, as if he had only to say, "Let there be light," and light was. This overmastering presumption of thought and hand, — for his fiery haste and erratic invention led to a frequent disregard of the qualities and limita-

tions of his vehicles, and also of natural law itself, — although it produced at times great suggestions if it did not great work, also gave origin to much mad work, not like Blake's spiritualistic visions, but crazy from excessive materialism of purpose. Constable would spit with disgust at sight of these lawless experiments. Turner, however, was as indifferent to blame as to praise. It sufficed him that he understood himself. He scorned those who could not comprehend him, brother artists above all. His aim was to grasp the creative-absolute, and master the infinity of nature. Ambition of this character looked with contempt on the seekers of the superficial pretty. A single truth in his view was simply a single letter of the alphabet of the landscape. To attempt its likeness, hosts of facts must be brought together in magnificent variety and glow.

The strength of Turner is most felt in his masterly rendering of the little as well as great features of nature, suggestiveness of forms and moods, and the essential relations and differences of things by means of color. His canvases have minds. They are intellectual rather than emotional appeals. Pictures form within pictures. There is an all-pervading mystery of meaning or expression in his masterpieces, whether in oils or water-colors. Nature's infinite self-hood is felt and seen. He recasts the varied splendor of the elements, with magical sleight of color. He is the first to portray the real life of the clouds; to thrill one's senses with their magnificent symphonies of alternating gloom and glory as wrought out by sunlight and shadow, or the marshalling of their innumerable storm hosts.

Turner is too profoundly original to have successful disciples. The benefit he does art, is to manifest its capacities in a new and popular direction. Landscape art has not advanced since him as a whole, any more than figure-painting since Titian. If we gain in particular we lose in general aspects. It is easier to denounce his wilfulness and exaggerations than to equal their reserved power and suggested thought. He never hesitates to sacrifice the little and literal in design to heighten the eloquence of coloring in mass. Figure-drawing is often limited to splashes of color. His later compositions particularly, are crowded with details, which seen separate confuse, but as wholes declare a definite purpose. There are water-colors and notes of effects that seem like bits of nature itself. Turner's first pitch of coloring was after the old masters. He subsequently originated that daring rivalry of tint with nature as far as pigments would

permit which has since become so disastrously common, making white lead its chief reliance for atmosphere and light. This is as exhaustive of resources in the outset, as it would be for a general to bring all his reserves into battle at the first onset.

Unfortunately, much of the best work of Turner is the most perishable, owing to his technical recklessness and wantonness of experiment. Each year impairs our means of adequately knowing him. To point some of them out as clearly as time and decay will admit, I refer to a few of the more characteristic of his works open to the public. In audacity of original conception and gorgeous painting, what excels "Ulysses deriding Polyphemus;" for the imaginative terrible, the "Dragon of the Hesperides;" for weird, supernal invention, the "Angel standing in the Sun;" for tender sweetness, atmosphere, and poetical feeling, "Crossing the Brook;" for profound pathos, "Old Teméraire;" and for picturesque sentiment and solemn association of the sea with the unheadstoned dead, the "Burial of Wilkie." Verily, Turner had an immortal soul, whether he recognized its future or not.

Once beginning to show the versatility of Turner it is difficult to pause. But descriptions and allusions to works of art are of little satisfaction to those who have not access to them. Turner is as completely the climax of the English mind in his department of art as Shakespeare is in his. Each embodies the national feeling for nature as it is, one in man, the other in the landscape, with some analogy of creative power and revealment of profound and subtle truths. I do not think that Turner proposed to himself any deeper motive than to render what his eye caught, fancy wove, or to produce splendid or involved mysterious effects in rivalry of nature's. Be this as it may, the fact remains that England enjoys the honorable distinction of having produced the most varied and thorough master of landscape.

# CHAPTER IX.

## THE ART OF JAPAN

ON the opposite side of the globe, at the remotest point from England, there is another insular race of strongly marked nationality, and possessing as characteristic an art, as far as it extends, as the English. Like theirs, its civilization in the outset was derived from the contiguous continent. But whatever it took from China, the fountain of its art, was speedily assimilated into fresh and vigorous forms. Rigorously excluding all foreigners, until within a few years, we have known nothing of its real character. Even now our knowledge is restricted, but what we have learned indicates a people possessing remarkable artistic skill, though in theory and practice widely differing from European. It is worth our while to get a glimpse of an original art, which has intrinsic merit, and, including the kindred Chinese, is the exponent of the taste of nearly one fourth of the human family.

The art-design of China, so far as is now known, is inferior to that of Japan, though fundamentally similar. Only a faint instinct is shown for graceful outline. In general, the choice goes to the odd, brilliant, grotesque and ugly, but striking in decoration without any constructive connection with the main object. Idealization of the human form is unknown. Their oldest illustrated books and manuscripts are finer executed than the modern, but with similar minute elaboration, and disregard of truth of form, perspective, and rules of composition. Were Oriental art proper represented only by the un-ideal, monotonous Chinese design, it would not deserve notice other than as a curiosity. But that of Japan is as much beyond it in execution and expression, as the art of England and France is superior to the meagre, stagnant Byzantine. We can get no adequate notion of the æsthetic capacity of the furthermost Asiatics and the peculiar direction it takes, without becoming acquainted with Japanese work. My conclusions are based on a series of an-

cient manuscripts, splendidly illuminated in water-colors on powdered gold backgrounds of varied tones, bearing the imperial mark, mounted on cloth, in silk-bound volumes, measuring sixteen inches high by thirty-eight long. A scholar from Jeddo informed me that the writing was too ancient for him to read, but that it related to a war which occurred eight centuries since, between a Chinese and Japanese emperor.[1] Be this as it may, the volumes are lavishly adorned with elaborate paintings of great delicacy, and brilliancy of design and tinting, representing battles, sackings, marches, mythological scenes, towns, landscapes, historical events, and domestic scenes, banquetings, executions, religious rites. The mode of using gold differs entirely from the old European methods. It is effective as lustre, but breaks up the pictures, leaving portions of the scenes in a golden fog, or obscured by a sort of frost-work of the same rich material, which is also largely used in details of armor, costumes, and wall decorations, but on so minute a scale as to require a magnifying glass to make out all the design. The treatment of the landscape backgrounds is conventional, bordering on the symbolical, while the rest of the work is realistic, aiming to secure the utmost splendor of particular effects, consistent with a quiet harmony of general tone. Throughout, the masses of color are carefully balanced and opposed.

Besides these, I have studied the works of later men of repute in Japan. Some are colored albums of landscapes, costumes, domestic and national incidents. Two series deserve special mention. One is by Boun-Tiyô a recent artist, the other by Oksai, who lived one or two generations back, my Japanese informants not being precise as to the period of his death.[2] Both are distinguished names of the

*Boun-Tiyô and Oksai.*

[1] A European scholar tells me that the books in question form part of a series of nine volumes, of great antiquity, translated from the Chinese into Japanese, with notes, relating to love, war, mythology, and contain moral axioms and other instructive matter, compiled from ancient authors. The set was splendidly got up and illuminated for the ladies of the imperial household, but that he had never seen others than those in my possession, nor could he find the work mentioned in any Chinese catalogue. My Japanese informant said that he knew of but one other series, and that was in the royal library at Jeddo.

[2] Oksai is said to be an assumed name of the artist, like that of George Sand, and literally refers to or means the locality of the studio or place where the designs were executed.

same school, the first showing much cleverness, the last decided genius. Indeed, he is the great Japanese master, ranking at home as Albert Durer does in Germany, Hogarth in England, and Doré in France; in fact, exhibiting some likeness to the intellectual qualities and executive capacities of each of these artists, but after a novel method of his own, and with a versatility of invention that would be remarkable anywhere. Such is the similarity of motive and treatment of some of the designs of Oksai and Doré, that one might infer the latter had taken effective hints from the former, which is not improbable, as Oksai's volumes appeared in Paris at the time some of Doré's most striking designs were published.

Oksai's works are so voluminous, that I conjecture they must contain the drawings of more than one master, probably a school of artists. One series is a sort of pictorial encyclopedia, containing, by a rough computation, more than twelve thousand designs, partly colored, in thirty-nine or more volumes, divided into three sets, illustrative of life, manners, arts, natural history, scenery, caricature, religious myths, poetry, riddles, and science; in fine, a compendium of Japanese civilization and products, mainly in sharp outline. His albums of birds are said to be exquisite, but too costly, and so much esteemed in Japan as to leave a small chance for the foreign collector to obtain any. Oil-painting is not practised, except as a late European innovation. They give examples of our science of perspective without radically adopting it; at least Oksai does.

The first aspect of Japanese art is most striking for its oddness. A prolonged examination discloses artistic qualities which amply compensate for those technical shortcomings or omissions that our system of art-training prepares our eyes instantaneously to notice. Japanese artists render certain truths with prodigious characterization, while neglecting some that we hold to be indispensable. Indeed, these do not appear to enter into their theory. The most obvious are the common rules of perspective, distance, proportion, symmetry, light and shadow. It is common to omit fore and back-grounds. The figures exist only in and by themselves, quite independent of local accessories. Without these, and a proper distribution of details to make up a complete whole, we feel that a picture is wrong. Japanese artists emphasize forcibly the main point, and neglect side issues or aids. Their æsthetic point of view, feeling, and comprehension is antipodal to the Occidental. They concen-

trate attention on a few aims; we divide and scatter it among many. Our system gives the impression of general fidelity to nature; theirs a special. It is broken talk, like infants'. Their system omits much in a picture, as did our old religious painters, intent on their central idea, that modern European art requires. The Japanese display a vigor of realism seldom equalled by Europeans. By the simplest means they suggest distance, perspective, broad masses, far-off horizons of sea and land; in short, an effective realization of the larger features of landscape. Zigzag lines adroitly lead the eye into interminable space. Abstract, easy, and prosaic as this means is, nothing more quickly arouses the imagination to complete the landscape. Church, Auchenback, and their class, paint so that the reflection of their work does not pass on from the eye to the mind. They give more to see, but we actually see less. A Japanese artist, in drawing a house, is most likely to put it wrong end foremost as to perspective, but he will give breadth and grandeur to the landscape as a whole, without any perceptible effort or elaborated artifice, but by a sort of visual instinct. Grammatically it may be all wrong, but the impression is truthfully profound. However this is accomplished, art secures its chief triumph. Our artists have something to learn from as well as to teach the Japanese. If the latter by rapid, incisive outline gives a better idea of a given object than the former by laborious drawing, then we needs must recognize in the Asiatic a technical sleight of hand, and an insight into the character of the thing represented, superior to the Europeans. All who examine the drawings of the Oksai series are astonished at their forcible characterization and action, independent of modelling or relief. Noteworthy results are produced by solid or shaded outlines only, with a few light, rapid touches to indicate parts or movement.

The genius displayed is interpenetrative and demonstrative, unique in quality, delighting in that action which exaggerates or ridicules the real, yet truthful and thorough in reproducing the habits, instincts, actual life, and absolute identity of plant, insect, fish, bird, animal, or man. Oksai's style of drawing surpasses any similar efforts that I have seen in Europe. I feel at once exactly what he means me to see, and at the same time the latent vitality or instincts of the objects rendered, or capacity, if it be human. Oksai evokes the fraternity of life, whether I wish it or no; teaches me natural history and human

nature, often ludicrously, always genially, sometimes coarsely, but ever truthfully. I may admire Audubon's and Bonaparte's birds, for their correctly painted plumage and forms, but one glance at Oksai's colorless or tinted designs awakens more sympathy with animal life, besides disclosing the instincts and habits of birds and beasts in a more graphic manner, than the highly finished European illustrations. This specific superiority applies also to the vegetable kingdom, and to man himself in his ordinary aspects. Oksai makes him lift, struggle, play, joke, gamble, love, fight, boast, beg, juggle, eat, stand, walk, pull, repose, in fine *live*, with a realism that I find nowhere else more intensely genuine. No idealization; no sacrifice to conventional propriety; no aspiration for the beauty of flesh or of holiness; no special dignity or majesty, though plenty of lively posing and accurate action; nature, earth-nature; Japanese men and women of all grades, exactly as they are; such is the inexorable logic of Oksai's pencil. Would that I could reproduce a few hundred of his designs to illustrate my words, but it would require time to do it. There are mere dots, the tiniest of touches and strokes, that have in them a kingdom of meaning. The effect is increased by the nicely shaded paper, perfect printing, and delicately colored inks of the best editions.

Japanese art is worth studying, if for no other end than to see how thoroughly it opposes the objective common to the subjective beautiful of the Greeks. Each is a generic success. Yet, as regards the animal and vegetable kingdom, the Japanese style of design is singularly idealistic in the sense of rendering with great exactitude and wonderful refinement the essence of the thing itself, in that shape or action which most perfectly expresses its vital functions. This is particularly true of birds, leaves, flowers, and grasses, which display as close an observation of their finer forms and manner of growth, joined to an intuitive perception of their inner organization, as did the Grecian sculptors of the human figure. The Japanese recognize souls in things. Some may insist that their skilful treatment of the lower forms of creation is the result simply of keen-eyed imitation. But the Chinese, Dutch, and French genre painters are painfully exact in imitating objects, without giving them that subtle consciousness of organic existence which the Japanese infuse into their work.

Oksai and Phidias are masters of the human figure, but in what diverging systems and aims! In view of their purpose,

both are equally true. But the Athenian evokes the godlike in man; the Oriental, the every-day human, choosing that type and movement which thoroughly demonstrates his earthiness. When he indulges in the mystical, transcendental, or sentimental, it is oftenest as grotesqueness and diabolism, or to invent supernal ugliness, as the ancients created beauty to be admired for its own sake. A people can be trained to delight in the false as readily as the true. As they become habituated to artifice and error, their taste gravitates towards them. The mind forfeits its faculty of detecting and appreciating the really beautiful. The skill and feeling which Japan has shown in managing minor motives, indicate a capacity for a more exalted ideal in the higher. But her æsthetic bias and standard being guided by false conceptions of religion and low aims, her artists were obliged to develop corresponding types. In estimating their ability, we must keep steadily in sight what they meant. They are far from being incompetent or ignorant. On the contrary, they are exceedingly clever, apt, and skilful in whatever they touch, only their taste is at fault from want of right culture.

In one respect the American and Japanese mind is somewhat alike; and this is a capacity of broad humor and appreciation of the wit which makes exaggerated contrasts and ridiculous similitudes. We make fun of very serious things, not in art yet, because we have not learned how, but in newspapers. The Japanese puts an undercurrent of drollery into his gravest motives. Oksai represents the terrific thunder-god, fantastically sublime, whose lightnings fall among a group of peasants, causing a ludicrously fatal catastrophe. The wind-god is an extravagant, burlesque conception of a being borne rapidly through the air by an immense bag of wind around his neck. Regard the tiger-stealth of the assassin creeping up in the jungle behind a fashionably dressed personage serenading the full moon with a flute. A cold shiver passes over one at the intensely murderous movement, while the naive unconsciousness of evil of the victim absorbed by his transcendental occupation in the midst of a sinister landscape, provokes a smile. The serenity of the enticing moonlight is admirably offset by the glum death-stroke approaching from out of the shadow. It might pass for the genius of a fatal fever about to strike down the unsuspecting victim in the zest of his pleasure. Whether it tells a tale or points a moral, only a reader of the text may know; but it is one of varying hundreds equally quaint and vigorous, of which the mocking spectre of the air, a shadowy, bat-like face on

a female form, whose long black hair half envelops her elf-like body, and streams wildly back as she speeds through the sky, and the genius of solitude, a more comely nude figure, with similar hairy covering, sitting and gazing into vacancy with intense earnestness, one hand on the mouth and the other clutching the knee, are pertinent specimens. Humor is omnipresent in Oksai's work. Oddity, contrast, burlesque monstrosity, enigma, the laughable, ferocious, terrible, ironical, exaggerated, foolish, droll; birds and animals humanized by man's vices, follies, or fun; men turned by enchantment into impossible monsters, doing the most extravagant vagaries; such are some of his inventions, literally a NONSENSE-ART, unique in variety, force, and comicality. Leonardo's freaks with the human face are labored extravagances compared with Oksai's grotesque maskery. However absurd his pencil, its juggling cleverness and quickness make his nonsense seem as if nature itself was playing the fool. Noses like the proboscis of an elephant are fitted to human faces in a life-like manner, and made to do the strangest acts. One young lady ties a pen to hers, and writes love-songs on the wall of her chamber. Arms, legs, and necks suddenly grow to snake-like lengths, and involve their possessors in frightful scrapes. Jugglers and conjurors perform miracles that would amaze the most credulous believers in vulgar spiritism. Oksai's genius in this connection might aptly be surnamed Legion.

Much of the drapery of people of rank appears stiff, angular, and cumbersome, though scarcely more so than that of the earlier German schools. In part this is intentional, though the lines of all drapery are sharp and incisive, with very little curve and flow. The ease and naturalness of the smaller figures, sometimes graceful and dignified, are admirable. Costume fits the action. Although figures are generally flatly outlined, lacking contour and projection, the suggestion of form is good, and the meaning strongly put.

*Japanese sensualism.*

As is to be expected with a people having no idea of the beautiful, realism runs readily into sensualism or vulgar materialism. The obscene art of Japan is inconceivably monstrous, and betrays a liking for the absolute in vice, such as no European nation would outwardly tolerate. But the domestic habits make modesty impossible. Hence artists depict indecencies in a matter-of-fact style, with the unreserve that attends the habits of animals. What is so common seems to carry with it no special pollution, as with peoples of nicer

customs and purer moral sense. Oksai shows Japanese ladies inflicting a punishment on unresisting menials such as would not be conceived by an European imagination, assuredly not submitted to by the vilest person. How can personal delicacy be developed where prostitution is an honorable profession, the portraits of famous courtesans hung in religious temples, and shamefacedness unknown. Æsthetic sensualism and vulgarism do infinite harm in Christian communities, for there exists a public sentiment capable of being debauched and degraded. But in the East, where it is already in its lowest level, there is no further depth for it. An acute capacity of sensuousness on the sensual side, joined to a perverse desire to taste fruit forbidden by the gods, is essential to entire corruption of heart. This is what classic art finally came to, and what French art in part threatens to become. The sin of these peoples is wilful because, knowing purity and truth, they select the vicious and untrue; while much of Japanese want of modest disguise has its origin in not seeing their own nakedness, and an insufficient standard of home refinements, which have not radically emerged from the habits engendered by their primitive nomad life. Both Oksai and Boun-Tiyô, in all their works that I have seen, avoid the voluptuous or directly immoral. Japanese grossness is ungilded, and consists rather in the choice of certain motives not so improper in themselves as unsuited to art. The chief ethical defect is levity and want of conscience. There is no tenderness or philanthropy. Suffering and destitution excite laughter more than pity. Life is seen either through ludicrous or material spectacles. Nothing is softened by idealism, but much is heightened for drollery. In Oksai there is noticeable an active sympathy with the common people, whose foibles and habits furnish him an inexhaustible source of pictorial jokes. Nowhere do I detect snobbery or conventionality, certainly no predilection for rank, in his many-sided freebooting pencil. Yet there is no evidence of higher aim than to entertain by recording the fleeting thought, or to illustrate the passing fact, unless it be seen in their bizarre monsters that represent their religious notions, and which exalt the ugly into representing the supreme and apparently maleficent power, that must be propitiated at any cost. Without a knowledge of the text that accompanies Oksai's designs, any criticism on their real intent is of necessity empirical. Especially, the mystical or sacred art remains an enigma. Its aspect on one side is demoniacal, materialistic, and ascetic, pro-

lific of terror, abounding in visions, evocations, and ghostly apparitions. Some of the designs imply beholding spirits, or conjuring back the departed to hold intercourse with their world. They also have a pictorial way of sermonizing quite as telling as any verbal heaped-up agony of sinning. Oksai gives two maddened gamblers, unnoticing above them that the demon of play has spun a thick web, in the centre of which he sits, like a huge spider, with enormous eyes chucklingly watching them, as he poises himself for the fatal spring. This design would make an excellent back to our playing-cards. There is a colored cut by another artist, embodying the disastrous physical effects of lechery, that is a sermon in little, but graphic enough to startle the nerves of the most thoughtless sinner. A lucid sense of final retribution is betokened by avenging phantoms, drawn from their world of shadows, as ingeniously frightful as the worst nightmare could furnish. Their divinities are shaped after the images of a disturbed imagination or incoherency of reason. One god, Quanwero, enjoys thirty-six arms and one hundred heads. Jebis, the jolly fiend of the ocean, sustained by dolphins, is represented as if dancing the *cancan* on the waves. Although islanders, the Japanese show an incapacity of rendering the sea. They have only two sorts of quaintly primitive tones, one for calm and one for storm. Yet they attempt in bronze, not without a hint of success, to render the toss and roll of breakers; only the crests of the waves get shaped into weird-like claws, which, however, accord very well with their fantastic effigy of Neptune.

Cheou-lao, god of longevity, familiarly called the "Old Child," is a favorite Eastern divinity. He was born 601 years B. C., after eighty-one years' pregnancy of his mother, so the myth runs. As his venerable image shows, he was always gay, living long and jovially, believing that happiness consists in so doing, and ever seeking by means of alchemy to find the secret of terrestrial immortality. Japanese mythology is as pantheistic in its ideas as the Grecian, only, instead of finding the divine in beauty, it invests the creative and governing elements of life in fantastic and ugly shapes, repulsive to our eyes, but which may nevertheless fascinate those of the devout Japanese.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PAINTERS OF FRANCE.

*Foreign element*

WHILE Italy, Germany, and Flanders possessed renowned schools of painters, and which had wholly in Italy and partly in the other countries passed into stages of decline, France in common with Spain and England had acquired no European reputation in this direction. The foreign element early exercised considerable influence, in the higher aspects a controlling one, on French art. To go back to A. D. 1338–9, Simone Martini, the rival of Giotto, was called to Avignon, and, working there until his death five years later, inspired French taste with a liking for the loftier motives and broader treatment of his native land. Previously, the degenerate Byzantine models had been popular, as may be seen in the "Heures de l'Empereur Charlemagne" of the Louvre, A. D. 780. This is not specially French work, but it shows the condition of color and design at that epoch in Western Europe. It is scarcely better than the picture-hieroglyphics on skins done by American Indians, and betrays the final stages of decay of an illustrative and decorative art of a superior character which had preceded it.

A little later, in the MS. Bible of the Emperor "Charles le Chauve," A. D. 850, there is improvement. The figures are red on blue ground, with superior action, and contours tolerably well given. The "Bréviaire de St. Louis" is entirely Byzantine in treatment. These two works, and the "Statutes de l'Ordre du Saint Esprit," A. D. 1232, may be seen in the Louvre. The last, though stiff and flat in its miniatures, shows more vigorous coloring and movement, and a decided tendency to escape from Byzantine conventionalism into a more life-like art.

Subsequently we find French illustrative art alternately controlled by German and Italian influences, forming no absolute, great school of its own, though rich in decorative work, delicate and brilliant in execution, inclined to the picturesque in its illu-

minations of manuscripts, free and natural, equally removed from the religious idealism of the Italian masters on the one hand, and the prosaic literalism of the Germans on the other. In the best MSS. of the mediæval epoch may be detected the germs of the leading characteristics of subsequent styles of painting. In general, however, the painting of this time is of foreign stock, weakened in its transfer to the soil of France. The gold background pictures that exist, have few of those strong, original qualities which appertain to the contemporary work of the leading schools across the Rhine and beyond the Alps. Indeed, they deserve citation only in justification of Francis I. and his successors, in summoning from Italy, Da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Cellini, Primaticcio, and other foreigners to the rescue of art altogether in France. In a national sense the results of their visits were nothing. They merely transferred to their foreign abode the art of their native land, adorning the country with fresh and beautiful works, whose style and feeling were imported from Italy. Their transient example could not renovate or recreate a nation's art. The only credit due France is for having had the good sense, when she found herself lacking, to call in the aid of her more richly endowed neighbors. That the imported art did not touch the people, and stimulate them to work out something in their own way appertaining to their own lives and thoughts, was owing to the one-sided spirit which characterized the proceeding. It was not intended to benefit the people, but simply to gratify aristocratic taste, glorify the king, adorn his palaces, beautify his court, and so, by means of a magnificent art, to widen still more the great gulf between the ruler and the ruled. The Medicean graft of bad blood was an exotic like the sensuous art it sought to nationalize in France, and neither succeeded in becoming French.

François Clouet, born at Tours A. D. 1500, and who lived to be seventy-five, is the first French master of other than local celebrity. Yet his reputation is based on a limited foundation, few genuine pictures of his, and these portraits, being known. His father being a German, Clouet's style has nothing in common with the grand Italian then in vogue, but is derived from the school of Holbein, but far inferior in breadth, dignity, and profundity to that powerful master. Clouet's manner is dry and hard. Great precision is given to details, and strict attention to design. We find, also, a *spirituel* apprehension of character and taste in

*F. Clouet.*
*Cousin.*
*Claude.*
*Poussin*
*Le Sueur.*

arrangement which more particularly belong to French art. These qualities alone connect Clouet with the national school. His scholars are mere formalists, firm and fine in finish, which is their great aim, but wanting in that subtle mental discrimination which gives intellectual vitality to the master's elaborate brush-work.

Jean Cousin, a contemporary, makes but a sorry figure as an artist in his fantastic, panoramic "Last Judgment," in the Louvre. It is the usual turmoil of material horrors, destitute of those grander qualities of the Italian masters, which partially elevate the spectacle above the level of an exhibition of lustful vengeance and demoniacal wrath.

It is unnecessary to dwell on names which local pride alone exalts to the rank of great artists. My purpose is to inquire how far the works of later men, of wider fame, merit the esteem awarded them by national partiality.

To facilitate inquiry, let us group artists according to their political eras, selecting conspicuous examples of each. This compels generalization, with its sins of omission and want of exact individual specification, but in the main it will be just. The world at large has only time to deal with general results. To do complete justice to every artist would require volumes instead of pages of criticism. With few exceptions in any school, there does not exist sufficient public interest in their works to justify a very particular investigation. But a verdict as a whole is needed, giving to each distinguished master his proper position while holding him responsible for the uses of his gifts.

Three names dominate in the 17th century — Claude Lorraine, Nicholas Poussin, and Eustache le Sueur. The first two, in their departments, are representative men of universal reputation. Le Sueur is not much known out of his native land. These painters are the foremost examples of the French school. In citing them, however, everything is given to the accident of birth, and nothing allowed to the actual training and career, which, in the instances of Claude and Poussin, were Italian, both dying in Rome, where they had lived and studied during most of their lives. Neither can be called French in their art any more than West, Copley, or Leslie can be claimed for the American school. The nationality of an artist needs be considered in an investigation of his art only so far as the qualities of race are manifested in his works. Every country is prone to

arrogate to itself the reflection of greatness of genius born on its soil, although it may have despised or persecuted it when living, or driven it, as Florence did Dante, elsewhere for liberty to grow. The true country of any one is that which gives him the fullest freedom to assert his entire humanity; which fosters, inspires, trains, and makes him a complete man; which he elects as most completely fulfilling his aspirations in life, and whose life he most reflects in his own. Undoubtedly blood affects character, but its influence is secondary to those conditions chosen by the individual himself for his mature development.

Le Sueur's art-education, although acquired in France, was as really foreign in its sources as that of his distinguished contemporaries, but his decorative style is characteristic of his origin. It is inaccurate at this epoch to speak of French painting in an absolutely national sense, as in the cases of Spain, Italy, and Germany, because the France of the 17th century, as in the 16th, had nothing to distinguish her among nations, except what foreigners brought to her, or was borrowed from other countries by her eclectic artists, and not yet fully assimilated into a strictly indigenous school of art. For some time yet, we must discriminate between adopted and native art.

Poussin, the French Raphael, as he has been called, was born A. D. 1594, and labored prolifically until A. D. 1665. Has he those eminent qualities claimed by his countrymen? I fail to see in him anything great, original, or emphatic, either in thought, design, or color. Of all distinguished artists, he is one the most made up from others; a learned, skilful eclectic, who adds nothing original or great to art. If all he ever did were destroyed, it would be no loss, because painting would still retain in others, in a higher degree, every excellence to be found in him. His numerous works are washy in substance, weak or second-hand in thought, and often hasty and careless in execution, especially in draperies. The types of his figures are monotonously uniform, and want character. His chief actors have a tendency to grimace in lieu of expressing passion or thought. The more elevated his personages, the more absurd or feeble they are apt to appear, his paintings in this respect being worse than his designs. Look at Nos. 422 and 427 of the Louvre, the "Judgment of Solomon" and the "Adulterous Woman," as illustrations. The Saviour is inane to the last degree. Regard for a climax his masterpiece, No. 434, "Raising the Eyes to the Almighty," a figure which makes the rudest Byzantine work in

the same vein seem grand in comparison. Poussin's "Ancient of Days" is a curly-headed vaporous dandy in dishabille, attended by frisky angels in keeping with his drawing-room graces; as an example of the meretricious, academic-pretty, it is a well-balanced composition, with graceful languidness of pose, some force of expression, but as empty of thought as a gourd. There is no reserved emotion or suggestion. The coloring is thin and impoverished. Yet technical qualities appear to be the artist's highest aim. Blind to defects of their favorites, the authorities of the Louvre place this picture, a "Descent of the Cross" by Jouvenet, a clever translation in French of Rubens' vigorous materialism, and the feeble phantoms of Le Sueur, in the position of honor in the famous *Salon*, putting them in direct competition with the finest Titians, Veronese, Correggios, Raphaels, Leonardos, Murillos, Vandykes, and Rubenses, provoking comparisons which make the French masters appear more insignificant than they really are; an injustice happily not repeated with their later and stronger men.

Poussin's Virgin, in his "Holy Family" No. 424, is a milk-maid; true feeling being sacrified to plagiarism and the conventionalisms of composition. Both in classical or Scriptural subjects there is a want of individuality in his personages. Like actors, they can change characters as easily as their costumes. His coloring is cold, monotonous, and conventional. Poussin toils after graceful and well-balanced compositions, careful to avoid any solecism of taste as decided by academic rule. He is always the fine gentleman in art; pleasing on superficial view, accomplished, well instructed, clever of hand, never vulgar in manner or violent, ever self-possessed, but emasculated of original power. Few artists better appreciate the qualities of the great masters of Greece and Italy, or more persistently choose their themes from intellectual motives of a high character, irrespective of any ruling sentiment of his own. Still there is no flow of genius into him. He recasts old themes with a certain facility of expression, selecting those which best show off his academic culture, but soon reaches his limitations and is great in nothing. Indeed, he is only the shadow of the greatness of others. Such feeling as can be detected is for the sensual-classical. When most influenced by the manner of Titian, he is best. Sacred compositions are dwarfed into life less tableaus or pictorial abstractions, having no virtues except of brush. His versatility appears to best advantage in landscape,

from the later Bolognese, chiefly Domenichino. It gives a poetical, heroic, aristocratic aspect to mother earth, as if it were too refined for rude labor, or savage life of any sort. The wilderness is banished from its polished surface, and everything that offends æsthetic repose, or suggests harm, suffering, or poverty, is put out of sight. In their place we find the elegant, serene, and graceful; a pleasure-bestowing, lordly landscape, temple and palace-clad, purged of gross humanity and vulgar needs; fitted up for gods, nymphs, deified heroes, and a select company of mortals. There is nothing in this impossible ideal of nature to love, or which can benefit us, other than as it responds to an Arcadian dream of a golden future or reverie of an imagined past. It is the romantic outgrowth of the Renaissance before it changed from the ideal to the natural view of things, and for more than a century was the supreme type of its landscape-art, with the exception now and then of a vigorous revolutionary protest from men of the Salvator Rosa stamp.

The career of Le Sueur, born A. D. 1617, dying A. D. 1655, although so much shorter than Poussin's, was equally fertile in the same direction. His work is more equal and more vapid. In allegory he is refined and decorous, but wholly French in his taste for the decorative. There is no passion, depth, or high intellectual purpose, though some sentiment. His pictures are carefully studied, in color lively but inharmonious, and display facility of design. He strains less after epic grandeur than Poussin. The general impression is weakness. Monotony of expression and profiles, and absence of individuality are very apparent. His figures take the places assigned them, pose rightly, compose harmoniously, but, with an occasional exception of suggestive action, do nothing. At first view they excite expectation. We await mental impressions, and see only attitudes. The net result is soulless work. Over-study of the classical-statuesque killed the proper art of the painter both in him and Poussin, but the latter's more forcible effigies recall the lay-figure of the studio, while Le Sueur's are but painted phantoms. In style he is a sort of religious Boucher, striving for grace and delicacy, and ending in the sacred-pretty. Like Poussin he paints mythological pictures with equal facility and taste as those of his own creed. Poussin drew his inspiration more directly from the old masters of Italy and Greece. Le Sueur's comes strained through him. Both are academic dilutions of Raphael. They were capable of receiving impressions from and appreciat-

ing the productions of those they emulated, even of recasting their ideas; but not, like Rubens, who held the same great artists in equal estimation, of learning from them, and by the alchemy of their own genius giving fresh forms, thought, and style to painting. The distance between Rubens and Poussin is the exact measure between genius and talent. The loss of the one would leave a chasm in art. The annihilation of the other, and Le Sueur added, would cause no gap.

Gellée, commonly called Claude Lorraine, was born A. D. 1600, and died A. D. 1682. He, too, was a hard worker. His fame is a popular one, because founded on certain qualities appreciable by all. As an academician, his skill in design and learning are not equal to his contemporaries. Especially are his figures ill drawn, their action spiritless, and his composition in general extremely forced and conventional. Truth of detail is disregarded in his desire to beautifully render the broader features of nature. Landscape then was of the ideal sort; nature not being studied in a realistic light, but used as an auxiliary element to be made up by studio rules into the mock pastoral, classical, scriptural, or wild scenes which were in fashion. Rubens, Velasquez, and a few others may be considered an exception to the prevailing falsification of the natural. They painted what they saw in a broad, vigorous manner, life-like and refreshing; and next to the magnificent treatment of the landscape by the great Venetians and Correggio, theirs is the truest up to their time. Salvator's was a subjective art; an infusion of his own sorrowful and gloomy temperament, rejoicing terribly in the rugged and desolate. Nature to him was dark and avenging, and her mystéries and greatness frightful. His own weird imagination gave it final shape, and peopled it in kind, so that, except to kindred spirits, there is small satisfaction to be had in his rough work. Not so with Claude. He had no relish for the forcible, quaint, or terrible. There was nothing epic in his composition. His atmosphere was one of peace and quietness. Instead of darkening canvas with bitterness, ferocity, and disappointment of soul, or peopling it out of the wars, miseries, or diabolical imagery of humanity, Claude pipes joyously to the gay spirits of nature who sing and dance in the bright sunlight on verdant plains, with sparkling water and smiling hills in sympathetic unison. There is no work in his pictures; workmen, sailors, and their like, it is true, but they are all brightly clad, and look as if on parties of pleasure. How he delights in magnificent architecture of

the impossible stage-kind! His landscapes are composed for the enjoyment and repose of men. There is no poverty, crime, or harshness where the gentle, sensuous Claude lives. Nymphs, maidens, and ladies are safe there; the serene sky above and genial air about them suggesting the protection of the unseen guardians of nature. But the great debt we owe to Claude is his quality of light. As no man before him had done and none since surpassed, he floods his pictures with it warm and tremulous, giving infinite space and a breathable atmosphere to distances whose horizons recede always. Sunlight under his hand gleams, quivers, and mystifies. The cool, gray awakening of misty mornings rising over broad plains and far-off mountains, miles of space on inches of canvas, leading the eye by gradations of tone into hidden distances, the very poetry of light, he was equally felicitously facile in treating, with the rich, burning effects of noontide sun, or as it set in its golden heat.

It is much to have done this, not merely for its own triumph, but for the standard of excellence it established. All that we have had excellent in kind ever since has been fostered by it. But, greatest obligation of all, it stimulated Turner to work out his miraculous atmospherical scenery. Claude's range was limited, though complete within its compass. His affectations and weaknesses were those of his time; his enchanting qualities came of himself, not spontaneous, but slowly, after patient years of observation and trial. Claude dead to art, and it would have a long step in progress to make over again. His example is the more valuable for showing how much one sincere worker, following the bent of his own talents, and limiting himself to their possibilities, may do for his profession, instead of surrendering himself, body and soul, to the influences of others whose excellences are not to be rivalled by any fervor of imitation, as did Poussin and Le Sueur.

*Period of Louis XIV.*

It is not worth while to trace particularly the course of academic painting through the long reign of Louis XIV., having its fountain-head in the art of Italy in its decadence, and repeating itself within a prescribed circle with varied technical merit, but uniform want of true feeling, because with but unimportant variations we should find the same general features, inferior rather than superior in the artists that follow, many of whom were trained in the studios of Poussin and Le Sueur. Valentin, who somewhat anticipates this period, is a heavy, dull imitator of Carravaggio. Sebastien Bourdon is

serious in style, but neither his example, Jouvenet's, nor any other's of the makers of big sacred pictures with which the Louvre is crowded, down to the time of Sigalon, prove anything except the incapacity of the French school to deal with spiritual topics. They had not acquired the talent of our time of presenting a vivid spectacle of a given subject in its proper local aspect. Instead, we have immense canvases crowded with studio-figures put together into confused compositions coarsely conceived and treated; valueless as art and something worse as religion. Where all is bad, it is difficult to pillory one as an example. But the "Vision of St. Jerome," by Sigalon, may be worthy of this distinction. One might conceive of such a painting done by a mad Michael Angelo, of whose style it is a raving grimace as well as a painful satire on things sacred. There is nothing, indeed, elevated in French art from that day until our own time. If there be any wholesome æsthetic nutriment or mental value in the canvases of Le Brun and the rest of the courtly painters of the Louis XIV. period, I fail to detect it.

Pierre Mignard, A. D. 1610 to 1695, is the chief, and excels the others in coloring. He is a fit representative of that epoch whose highest motives in art were in pandering to the tastes of a monarch who thought to deify kingcraft by ignoble exactions of humanity, making it a low and contemptible thing, and by exalting puerile fooleries and vulgar necessities into state ceremonies. Whatever was true and good in man, this ruler tried to corrupt and pervert. That art was most worthy which to his blinded vision most completely represented the utter human sham that he was. They painted him a god, and he believed it. Rubens did a vast deal of this sort of lying in his day; but it was so bravely done, and withal a touch of satire in it, that he is to be forgiven for the very amplitude of his sinning. Besides, the world to him was a stage, and all men, high and low, subjects for his inexhaustible brush. But the men who painted for Louis XIV. gave themselves up wholly to his monstrous vanity, believing with his eyes that the ridiculous and preposterous were indeed the beautiful and sublime. Rightly is the art of this period known by his name. He was the author, by means of his favorite Lenotre, of that taste which, by the shears of a barber, did for vegetation what the last named individual did for him; that is, made it look as unnatural and absurd as possible. That nature even should be allowed to grow as God designed, was treason. So he clipped, and trimmed, and squared, and

stunted it, until all notion of the natural and true was lost to French taste. Even classical statues were subjected to the same stupendous wigs that disfigured himself. The style of the "*perruquier*" being supreme, the bizarre became the divine principle. Architecture and sculpture suffered equally at his hands. He made of the Renaissance an abortion, and perverted the Gothic into utter nonsense. When an absolute will overshadows the entire intellect of a country, giving to all things one hue and tone, it is difficult to fully take in all the harm done. But after time has stripped off the tinsel, the naked image of irresponsible power is disclosed in its loathsome magnitude. It is not sufficient to say that Louis XIV. retarded art, but he poisoned it and perverted its functions, as he did everything else he meddled with. France has not yet been able to wholly eliminate the virus he injected into her organic life. In judging of art, we have to keep in view its inherited obstacles to a healthful development. Even now, there is need to caution the novice against the sensual seductions and pompous pretensions of an epoch which gloried in its shame, preferred falsehood to truth, meanness to manliness, in fine travestied humanity as only a "great monarch" could. Pass it by. To obliterate it, would be to merit well of the world. If it must be looked at, let it be in humiliation and sorrow in witnessing how mean human nature can become.

*Epoch of Louis XV.*

There is at first a feeling almost of relief in turning to the art of Louis XV. But the final change is from what is self-degrading to the disgusting. Lascivious wantonness comes upon the scene. Meretricious effeminacy takes the place of studied pride. Kingcraft foregoes blasphemous masquerading, and takes to sinning in the open air like the lowest of mortals, exposing its concupiscence and shamelessness to whomsoever chooses to gaze at them. Pleasure was the motto. The laugh, the jest, to find fresh daily food for wanton desires, to parade vice, to jeer at wisdom, to scout at the end, "after me the flood;" of such was the new spirit in art, forming the first genuine French school, because springing from the dominant aristocratic tastes of the nation which were then the only ones recognized, the people still being an unknown quantity in politics and art. Nothing great now, nothing elevated, nothing pure, nothing deep except sin, nothing broad except effrontery. Taste in art from being degraded became depraved, vibrating between the extremes of the sentimental-pretty and the grossly sen-

sual. Cooks, barbers, dancing-masters, were privileged artists. Purveyors of "little pleasures" — in plain English, pimps, prodigal prostitutes, scented abbés, and their tribe — inspired an art whose highest efforts were given to snuff-boxes, porcelain toys, and the florid ornamentation of furniture and *salons* in accordance with the Pompadour taste, the Du Barry choice, or the Louis XV. dictation. Much was invented that was pretty and graceful. Small arts flourished like rank weeds. But adornment should be appropriate to the use and created with honest motive. In the present instance, the sources of inspiration being foul, the little arts were in the main pernicious, pandering to vanities, frivolities, and lusts, and obscuring noble effort. The dubious *mélange* of objects thus generated, constructively fine, — for good workmanship was the rule, — now known by the expressive term *rococo*, was in the mass worthless as art and thought. We may safely accept it as a general truth that there is an evil and false element in everything of that nature. Instead of imitating it in our furniture, upholstery, and decorations, we should instinctively shun it because of its impure origin. Great harm to the public mind has come of it, and its influence is still perceptible in this century.

The duty of grand art in the preceding reign was to celebrate the battles of the king, to adorn him, to magnify the great human carbuncle that he was into a beperiwigged Jupiter. Our modern Olympian, "by the grace of God," makes at the best but a sorry exhibition in his state trumpery. He got himself up as the image of omnipotent tyranny, forcing art to administer its needed artifices. The people do right to scoff at the prodigious show. In his day, however, it was an earnest, serious tyranny. The crime of treason was in an unbelieving look or a chance word. As bad as the spirit of the art then was, in which it was upheld by what was called religion, it had the merit of sincerity in execution. Evidently the reward of the obedient was ever before its eyes, until it came at last to have faith in its own panderings to royalty as the right way of art. Louis XV., however, tempered his tyranny with the license of pleasure and the scoffings of unbelief. His predecessor made a pretence of the name of the Lord for his acts; but the fifteenth Bourbon came out squarely for the Devil. The hypocrisy of the one and the openness of the other king are the sounding-notes of their respective fashions in art. If the mistress of the first must appear demurely pious in his old age, the harlot of the

second rollicked openly before the people. He was too obtuse to their existence to take into consideration their opinions; consequently he did not require of art that it should fortify his tyranny, but that it should sacrifice to his carnal desires. True he did not much need to recreate the former service, as his predecessor had reduced it to an organized system of ceremonies and spectacles that, once begun, went on themselves by mere force of routine and vested self-interests. They were, however, no longer a worship, only a habit of royalty. In the license of a pleasure-loving act, the national instincts for the gay, graceful and pretty, and the *spirituel* came lightly to the surface, but devoted to the inclinations of the ruler who had given it liberty. Its chief delight was in the mere frippery of ornament, to which was added a taste for the Oriental monstrous and grotesque, betokening an unwholesome love for things impure, unnatural and unbeautiful, or sentimental-decorative ruled by the caprices of fashion. The Vanloos, Watteau, and Boucher are fitting representatives of the frivolous, sensuous art of this period. Their finest work was given to fans, coaches, and cabinets for *salons*. They aspired to be always charming, in the natural sense of this word. Inventive and industrious, they deluged France with sense-seducing art, undertaking every sort of commission with equal levity of purpose and aptness of hand. Religious and classical subjects were intermingled with sensual and wicked. They decorated theatres, *salons*, and made designs for tapestries. Figure-work, landscape, animals, fantastics, everything fashion craved, they were prompt to execute, and with uniform results so far as the defilement of noble art was involved.

*Vanloo.*
*Boucher.*
*Oudry.*
*Desportes.*

As colorists they are monotonously thin and feeble, something of a sparkle perhaps to Vanloo, but paleness is common to all. Boucher's greens and blues look as if they had fainted, while his rosy tints, on which he relies for attractiveness, have the value of pink ribbons. His vegetation is an ethereal substance, with a general tone of confectionary surface-color. He holds landscapes to be made for powdered, perruqued, and hooped belles and beaux to fancy themselves shepherds and shepherdesses in. Its choicest nooks are reserved for the display of well-turned legs and delicately tinted bosoms with men gazing appetizingly thereon, or for nudity made unchaste by debauchery of intent and sensual disorder of drapery Frenchmen rarely paint unadorned obscenity, as did

the Dutch and Flemish artists, but insidiously suggest it. They are too polite a race for unmitigated grossness. Watteau's faces of men and women are the same for all his personages; his characterization being exhausted on limbs and attitudes.

Cruelty and sensuality being closely related, it is not surprising that the animal-painters of the epoch exhibit the fiercest instincts of their subjects. Painful as must be much of their art to a humane person, still it must be acknowledged that Oudry and Desportes paint real dogs, such dogs as Landseer never has given; with bone, muscle, action; canine instincts dominating, not a mere show of dumb skins or sentimental effigies. They hunt, pant, growl, bark, tear their game with remorseless grip, behaving like dogs in every respect that obey the brutal wills of vulgar-hearted masters. Aristocratic dogs, too, well kept and skilfully trained, like their owners despising poverty, and nothing loath to rend it for the fun of the thing. Unlike Boucher's and Watteau's human stock, they are solidly painted, mean work, and are put into landscapes that have some semblance of realism, although flat in color, and coarse in feeling. Veronese and Rubens paint a higher style of brutes in a few, broad, effective sweeps of the brush, giving the ideal dog, whose beauty and character attach man to him. On the lower plane of animal nature which Oudry and Desportes adopt, there is no work that surpasses theirs. It is a rude, healthful tonic, in contrast with the effeminate art of their brethren. Whatever is sanguinary is rendered literally and forcibly; but there is no exaggeration of torture and indulgence in the ghastly and disagreeable for their own sakes, as is to be seen in Salvatoresque battle-pieces.

Two painters relieve the general depravity and worthlessness of this time, Joseph Vernet and Jean Baptiste Greuze; each of whom, though widely apart in styles and motives is distinctly French. Honest Vernet, painting the landscape as he actually saw it whenever he was sufficiently himself to shake off the mingled Claudesque and Salvatoresque influences which at first hampered him, is a man to be prized in his generation. No silly pastoralism, or voluptuous sentimentalism, or nonsense of any sort adulterated his manner. He was destitute of imagination, and so had no dubious fancies to cast out of a teeming brain. Even the *spirituel* apprehension of his race was wanting. Vernet painted his southern climes in a truthful, prosaic way, making a pictorial record in the simplest language, without any

hidden sense or Turnerian involvement of form and hue. A matter-of-fact man, viewing everything with a child's literal eyesight, his art is wholly of the material senses. He loves the sea, sky, and shore with sailor-like heartiness. We get from him light, atmosphere, breeze, vigor, description, topographical truth, and the day's doings. His series of southern cities in this aspect are interesting. Claude's and Salvator's scenes, being compositions, give no local truth, and gratify only the ideal and æsthetic faculties. Vernet's proficiency in copying is almost Chinese. We are sure that the houses, vessels, boats, costumes, and people are as rigidly like the originals as a clear eye and a conscientious pencil can make them. On that Marseilles quay there are now at work the same persons on the same bales of merchandise, true to their marks and numbers, — business like for all time, — that he saw on the bright, breezy Mediterranean morning of A. D. 1754, when he carefully noted them down, and put the whole life before him into a vigorous picture. This is not great art, but it is useful work. His coloring is neither trickish nor feeble. He succeeds in getting the local colors into his panoramic pictures fresh and true, careless of other qualities or aims. It would have been better for the French school at this period if it had more scholars as honest and earnest as Joseph Vernet.

Greuze is not unlike him in sincerity and literalism of manner, but is of a different intellectual calibre. His style owes but little to color, being cold and disagreeable in tone and superficial in texture, except in flesh-tints, which although slight are delicate, transparent, and tender, marking a success where Boucher fails. The design is vigorous, and fancy graceful. Character is, however, his strong point. In this he has dramatic force. Of his ready talent of composition, the "Malediction" and "Son Punished" in the Louvre are pertinent examples. But in general his inclination is rather for the sensuous and coquettish; the *charmant* of his school, with no particular scruples of purity or desire for intellectual expression. The "Broken Pitcher," is the favorite specimen of his pretty manner. A few clever genre pictures, not as much esteemed in their day as they deserved to be, now cause him to be ranked as a great master by his countrymen, while fashion of late has pushed prices for even his common productions to a point not often attained by the greatest genius; a simple vaporous head of his, of no especial meaning, having sold for upwards of one hundred thousand francs.

We now arrive at a new phase of French painting. The sway of royal mistresses ending in the execution of Louis XVI. gives way to the retributions of the Revolution, and art transforms itself with the times. Having administered to the pride of one king and the sensuality of another, it now goes into the hands of their Nemesis, a people excited by tyranny into paroxysms of progress, and, though possessing noble ideas, mistaking their way to liberty. The downfall of the Bourbons carried with them their pernicious maxim, "*L'Etat, c'est moi*," and whoever since rules in their stead is compelled to substitute the people collectively as the synonym of political power. This forward step, slight as it actually is, has vastly changed and widened the scope of French art. At first the people, or those who acted in the name of the nation, sought patriotic inspirations chiefly from examples of Roman history. Art in consequence turned toward that source for motives and subjects. This was a fundamental political as well as æsthetic error. Nothing permanently good, and least of all national, would come of parodying the history of an obsolete race. Every genuine Gallic element was set aside by an unnatural admiration of the mythical deeds and doubtful virtues of the old masters of Europe, whose political watchword was dominion. There being no real applicability between the two cases, it resulted in much harm to the French nation. I have, however, only to show its effects on art which powerfully reflected the revolutionary fervor of the people.

*The art of the Revolution.*

The classical school, so called, developed by Louis David, first came into the ascendant; not the spirit of beauty and repose which distinguishes Grecian art, but the stormier and coarser features of the Roman taste and history. Its leading characteristics were ambitious compositions on immense canvases, great energy of design, flaunting surface-color, and theatrical display. History as acted on the stage was transferred to canvas with spectacular effect, and reduced to sensational tableaux, with the details of which real history had but little to do. In this there was nothing genuinely French, except the enthusiasm with which for a while the nation welcomed this attempt to impose at second-hand the ideas and manners of a people that had passed out of living history, on one for the first time striving to make a place for themselves in their own. But this pseudo-classical *furore* soon expended itself, and French nature came to the surface again.

David's school was useful in one respect, although false in others.

It operated as a salutary tonic to arouse art from the little and mean into more exalted veins of thought, and higher standards of excellence. It was a generous attempt to found a patriotic school of historical art in a grand style, and, however mistaken the performance, it let in a purer atmosphere. Those big pictures that nobody now looks at, were the results of hard study, fired by sympathy for human rights and heroic action. More positive and cold in color than the antecedent painting, exaggerated in action, in motives forced, unrealistic throughout, they were intended to be epic poems on liberty, as sung by the Revolution, or pictorial harangues on themes born of that great human spasm. But they were at bottom prodigious shams, counterfeiting virtues that did not exist at heart, or by great noise and show disguising their absence. Humanity could not long be taken in by them. After a momentary excitement and wonder, they passed into the category of abnormal art, never more to be mistaken for the genuine. The experiment of David has guided the modern reproducers of history into the right direction. Abandoning theoretical ideas, they seek to illustrate and recreate it on its own ground of truth of scene, event, and accessories, and from its own basis of thought and feeling. Instead of trying to make the past talk the language of our time, they take us back to the old, and introduce us to its actual life and character.

The chief artists that gave character to the first Empire beside David, and who may be considered especially the exponents of the ideas and styles that came in with the Revolution, were Géricault, Girodet, Gros, Gérard, Prud'hon, and Madame Le Brun. Their best works have been put by themselves into one of the great halls of the Louvre to challenge comparison with the masterpieces of the Italian, Flemish, Spanish, and German painters in the neighboring *Salon Carré*. A more unhappy position could not have been chosen for them, notwithstanding the inharmonious hanging, general confusion of styles, schools, motives, and too frequent bad condition of the foreign artists, owing to the neglect or incompetency of those having them in charge. The French school enjoys the advantage of a unity of tone and ideas, which composes the mind of the spectator at first ingress into its hall, and predisposes it towards enjoyment. This fails him completely on entering the *Salon Carré* because of the disturbing relations of the pictures themselves. Their finest qualities are not only lost in the jarring propinquity of

opposite elements, but the primary effect of them in mass is to bewilder. Plato in a mob is an ordinary man. Solomon in an assembly of kings loses his special magnificence. Genius is invisible in a crowd. So with the masterpieces of the *Salon Carré*. Entering it is like stepping into a mob of philosophers, prophets, saints, poets, emperors, angels, satyrs, and fair and false women; God's elect herded in a pen, labelled for show, and all talking at once. Amid this confusion of races and tongues, it requires strong self-command to select, comprehend, and enjoy a picture by itself. A sensitive organ would find an agony of sound if submitted to the music of operas, oratorios, and sacred, profane, military, and light compositions within one hall at one time. It is so here to a certain degree with the eye. Crowded with treasures of art, such is their confused arrangement and absence of means of quiet enjoyment of each picture in accordance with its own proper character, that, until the nerves become steadied and concentrated, it is a chamber of torment, instead of being on first view what it easily might be made to appear, the sanctuary of high art. But compared with the rival *salon* of the French masters, it truly is one, despite the great advantage of the latter in its unity of style and feeling. But this unity condenses itself into an impression of repulsion, in which disgust and horror are equally balanced; an impression which deepens with increasing familiarity with its paintings. Analyze them, and there is no mystery in this effect. They are false in character, coarse in expression, extravagant in action, when not feebly sentimental, and brutal in color. I do not include David's works in this anathema, their points having been already stated. Can any one look at the exhibition of physical suffering of Géricault's "Wreck of the Medusa," without having every æsthetic faculty outraged? If intended for a scene in the "Inferno," a raft of human souls adrift on a viscious sea, it might pass. But to call that pitchy slime the ocean is a foul libel. It is rare to find a Frenchman who comprehends at all this part of nature. He gets his idea of the movements of the sea from the oscillating canvases of theatres. Géricault's atmosphere is as unbreathable as his water is unliquid, while horror upon horror is piled up in his representation of starvation, until sympathy is overborne by the opposite emotion. His equestrian portraits are all fury and smoke; impossible in attitude and absurd in effect; realistic truth sacrified to *tours de force*.

Gros's "Battle-field of Eylau" is in a like view of the exag-

gerated-physical, a pictorial horror, acceptable only to a morbid appetite for the disagreeable. The "Plague at Jaffa" is somewhat better, but still making predominant the ghastly and appalling. It is lustreless, though strong in tint, with less of the positively ugly and coarse than in the other painting. A lifeless spectacle, it neither warms our sympathies nor elevates our sentiments. Even the action of Bonaparte is not made heroic, but simply curious, as if he experimented on his own courage rather than sought by an act of piety to inspire the sick with hope.

The "Deluge" of Girodet is an extraordinary burlesque, in which an impossible gymnastic action is the chief feature. His "Atala" is weakly commonplace. Madame Le Brun sacrifices to the sentimental-pretty. Prud'hon tries to translate Guido into French studies of flying draperies and a confusion of limbs and bodies, meaningless so far as the execution has any connection with the motive. Baron Gérard essays the same by Paul Veronese in Nos. 238 and 239, two allegories, lively in movement, with ample force and conventional color, but devoid of other aim than sensational effect. His "Psyche" is daintily silly.

Suffice it to say that the common defects of these men are want of right feeling, or an elevated conception of their themes, or even a natural one. They are revolutionary in art, the offspring of troublous times, producing compositions that would have affrighted Poussin and Le Sueur in their tame routine of academic proprieties. Gymnasts of painting I call them, when they do not affect the merely sentimental; for their chief effort is to startle by displays of vigorous design and technical force. They do not lack knowledge or skill. Their art is the antithesis of the effeminate school, and their sense of color is as coarse and unfeeling as that of the Louis XV. period was insipid and frivolous. Neither has produced works worthy of preservation, or beneficial in an æsthethic view. On the contrary, their influence is bad in taste and motives. But the revolutionists did good service in breaking up and dispersing the corrupt atmosphere of the former school, in introducing vigor and variety, and substituting for the baneful worship of royalty the love of national glory, which, although diverted by Napoleon too much towards military ambition, was based on a sentiment of patriotism. The many miles of canvases which have since been devoted by the ablest artists to a pictorial record of battles are graphic as narratives, but embody no higher lessons than the sanguinary triumphs of French valor. Reverses and humiliations

are studiously omitted, forgetful that defeat in a right cause is more to a people's glory than victory in an evil one. These military pictures, though not the most wholesome training for a nation, are, however, in every way superior to those in vogue in the royal edifices before them. Right or wrong, they are national, and every Frenchman is identified with their histories. An art which keeps alive in the people the consciousness of their own importance in the state, even though on a low plane of justice and right, merits an acknowledgment of its special benefit.

Let us now succinctly examine the successors of the masters of the first Empire, before closing with those whose reputations have not yet been fully tested by time. For the first, Horace Vernet, Delacroix, Ary Scheffer, Delaroche, Troyon, Ingrés, Décamps, Fleury, and Hippolyte Flandrin are sufficient to illustrate the varied development of their school immediately subsequent to the period just examined. Of these men, Vernet is the most direct offspring of the common taste and mind of France. He is the artist of the multitude. All is revealed at one look. His hand and eye are quick, memory retentive, and manner dashing, materialistic, and sensational. The love of excitement and adventure, a free camp-life, and brave deeds, are his special attractions. He tells his story rapidly and off-hand, freely emphasizing for effect, but in the main truth-telling. It is done by action, for he has no sentiment of color, and no higher intellectual aim than declamation. Vernet is a clever but not great artist. He rejects academic trammels, and makes himself a spirited reporter of history in its external look, the French soldier being his ideal man. In fine, he seems to be a sort of "our own correspondent" of the brush, after the stamp of the "Times's" Russell, very acceptable to those who care only for a lively told story.

Troyon in another field is equally materialistic, and protests with like power against old conventionalism. A heavy, coarse man himself, he depicts cattle to life — hard working and docile to his dull-minded masters, in a landscape savoring of heat and toil. He sees the earth only after the "fall!" There is no sentiment of paradise in it. In its kind his painting is hearty, done in a masterly but narrow vein. His animals are *animals;* not like Rosa Bonheur's skin-painted effigies in fields and atmosphere of opaque paint. Compared with her, Troyon is great. His realism is felt from nature; hers is artificial, clever in design, but wanting the breath of life. Troyon gives dust, sweat, work,

air. His peasants and cattle are in keeping with their natal clods. Latterly he grew to be greedy of profit and careless of reputation. But his best works form a landmark of positive progress in the right direction. He floods his pictures with glowing light and transparent shadow. One feels it is out-door work, and plenty of it; no shirking of application, but a strong brush obedient to a powerful hand. Troyon suggests life and movement; Rosa Bonheur counterfeits both. He is an Anak by nature; she only skims the surface of things.

If we are to judge artists only by what they actually do to advance their profession from a lower to a higher phase, Ingres deserves no mention. But some men must be cited either for the evil they do, the mistakes they make, or the little good use they put their talents to. In the Luxembourg there are frequent examples of each of these phases. Of men like Décamps, strong, original, with a profound subjective sense of color, Oriental in feeling and poetical in expression, who often waste their fine powers on topics unworthy of them, adding merely to the curiosities of art or its eccentricities, as in his monkey pictures; like Fleury, serious and intellectual, but, in aiming at the tragic and heroic, often bordering on the burlesque from overdone physical expression, as in his shrieking Queen; or like the accomplished Ingrés, striving for a high range of idealism in motives and design, and falling into the stale academic and effete conventional, conspicuous examples of which are shown in Nos. 102 and 105, "Jesus giving the keys to St. Peter," and "Homer Deified"; compositions forced from an unyielding imagination, confused in grouping, artificial, and feelingless. If possible, No. 103, "Roger delivering Angélique," a subject taken from Ariosto, is worse than the other two, for it is polished into sculpturesque smoothness, without texture of rock, flesh, water, or armor; academic precision and skill of touch, yes, but remote from any possibility of nature, and appearing more like a looking-glass reflection than painting. The cartoons made for the painted glass windows of the chapels of Dreux and St. Ferdinand at Sablonville are more favorable specimens of his technical abilities. The figures of the saints, drawn after the modernized Byzantine type, are quiet, dignified, but, like all modern work of this character, wanting in that solid archaic grandeur and richness which distinguishes the ancient art. Ingrés appears best in portraiture. This talent he shares with the artists of repute from Clouet down, for they have a faculty of seizing hold of salient points of character, and

drawing to the surface the *spirituel* elements. Painting, too, directly from nature, they succeed better as colorists.

Ary Scheffer is a poet, but not a painter. Color eludes his pencil. But his elevated imagination, purity of treatment, spiritual apprehension of his themes, often allied to the supernatural, and his recognition of Christian motives in their loftiest sense, render him a remarkable exception to the uniform tendency of his school to materialistic life and thought. He rarely attempts realism. Abstract ideas and religious motives, cold and shadowy, but lofty and pure as symbolized in his mind, he seeks to pictorialize. But he began otherwise. For a time, before he reached the lucid atmosphere of his final manner, he was infected with the passion for the horrible, and appealed to the spectator's sympathies by means of physical suffering only. But he never added to these lasciviousness or brutality, either in color or expression. Indeed, he finds difficulty in rising above the technically pretty; but throughout his art there is an inferior sentiment or feeling that appeals to the higher sentiments. The "Francesca" is an exception to his general want of strength. That borders on the sublime.

Delaroche is another exceptional artist, noteworthy for his poetical conception of historical themes, his elevated religious spirit, and his chaste manner. He is an academician, with a mind enlarged by study, and governed by purer taste than that about him. Averse to noise and movement, he is the reverse of Horace Vernet in style and feeling. The one fled from the Academy to nature for inspiration. The other buried himself in his studio to mature his conceptions by slow process of thought and work. Vernet would begin on an immense canvas at the top, and paint down with a rapid brush, finishing as he went. Delaroche had none of this extemporizing power. But he composed well, even eloquently; drew poems, eleborated academic work, but with less of that consciousness of hard toil which is apparent with Ingrés; had a noble sense of the human figure; an elevated appreciation of the true purposes of art; was tranquil and dignified, and would have been a great painter had his talents for coloring been equal to his other merits. In this respect he fails. His color is heavy, positive, and speechless. It even tells against the intellectual motives of his pictures. Like most moderns, he appears best in engraving. The chiefs of the old masters lose by it.

The example of Delaroche adds another to the frequent in-

stances in the French school of its loss of crowning glory because of the vital deficiency of a true instinct of color, which no education can perfectly remedy or intellectual delight in it in others secure to one's self. The Bolognese academicians sought to rival the Venetians by means of eclectic studies, and notably failed, though producing work of much value. The French fail also of reaching to the same great standard from like natural causes. Their native bias is for design. Hence their coloring, with but few exceptions, is the result of various scientific theories containing more or less but not all of the truth requisite to create perfect color. That fine sense which causes it to express moods and ideas, which makes it subjective and accessory to the main motive, is the exception, not the rule, with them. With the older Italians and Spanish painters, it is a common feature, and constitutes the fundamental excellence of their systems. United to equal genius of design, it gives them a completeness of æsthetic value we look in vain for on the same scale elsewhere, unless it be among the early Flemish and German masters. But color is employed by them in a more external and decorative manner. Delaroche worked for this gift, and so did Ary Scheffer, but neither succeeded in obtaining it. The conscientious career of Delaroche is an instructive example in his school. His temperament being melancholy, the subjects chosen by him were generally of that stamp. There was in him no spontaneity of execution, but rather slow, toilsome composition; a continual struggle towards an ideal, which, as in everything human, kept ever the same distance from the painter's easel. Each acquisition lifted the artist's standard a step higher. An eclectic student, laboring to arouse emotion by dramatic incidents taken quite as often from foreign history as his own, mostly pathetic and with a profound moral, having a sympathy with suffering, viewing facts in their poetical aspect, Delaroche is a man of striking talents and fine sensibilities, but not a genius in its large meaning. His intellectual faculties were so well balanced that he could have won distinction in any other career.

If it needed Ary Scheffer to temper the dominant materialism with his spiritual apprehension of art, it not less needed Hippolyte Flandrin as an example of a purely religious master. His sincerity and high-mindedness would have done honor to the best periods of the sacred art of Italy. Having a faith in divine things, Flandrin incarnated his ideas in a remarkable

series of wall-paintings for public edifices and in easel-pictures, borrowed in general characteristics from early Christian art, but treated in his own thoughtful and refined manner. Other religious art of France, with here and there an isolated or partial exception, is the mercenary labor of skeptical studios in which crucifixions, saints, martyrs, and the usual topics of the Bible and sacred traditions are painted from academic receipts or stolen outright from abler hands, without a trace of religious feeling. On the contrary, they are most often theatrical, silly, or inane if not vulgarly or maliciously wicked, and in their best condition simply endurable as displaying the æsthetic training of the composer. Flandrin's career in comparison seems like a light direct from heaven to guide the nation into a purer atmosphere. But its rays fall on indifferent men. Aside from the multitude of so-called religious works of the heartless patterns annually called for to fill up barren wall-surfaces in churches, the best sacred art now strives simply to attain either strict historical realism, praiseworthy and valuable from its external point of view, or falls into the common current of sensuous decoration. The more honor, therefore, is due Flandrin for his integrity. His talent of composition ranks him as a master, and he is as clear and simple in coloring as devout in spirit. But even he cannot free himself wholly from the realistic tendencies that environ him. Flandrin conceives after an original manner, keeps the religious motive in sight, but the realistic-picturesque prevails in execution, as is to be seen in his numerous frescoes in St. Germain des Prés. His most solemn figures are prophets and martyrs, Byzantine in feeling, but late Italian in execution. Although Flandrin stands at the head of French religious art, he would take no such rank among great masters elsewhere. There is nothing grand or profound in his works. He does not rise to the full height of his motives. The influence of Andrea del Sarto is perceptible in his style, except as he tries to give historical verity of accessories, while the Italian introduced only those of his own country and times; and although more equal Flandrin does not rival him in vigor. Below Domenico Ghirlandajo in power and invention, he makes but short approach to the qualities of a Leonardo, a Raphael, or a Michael Angelo. His is a relative greatness, founded more on contrast of his well-intentioned work with the defects of his school than any uncommon genius of his own. It is an example that goes to prove a general truth; namely, the incapacity of the French school

thus far to give birth to art based on exalted religious motives or moral feeling.

Let me illustrate from a picture by Giorgione what I mean by the word moral in this connection, premising that the earlier Venetian school abounds in similar motives. Giorgione wishes to depict how and why Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, previous to his excommunication, was reproved by the pope for his concupiscence and cruelties. As an artist, his first care is to make a complete painting, but which shall declare forcibly the moral of the tale. He paints a broad, hilly landscape bounded by the densely blue Apennines, — that intense blue that tints his native hills, — and intersperses the fore and middle grounds with forest and cultivated lands, abounding in flowers, and the game the feudal lord loves to hunt. Malatesta's castle is in a distant mountain-peak, at the foot of which is his tower. A shepherd is piping to his flock in one spot, while not far off a savage hound is worrying a hare to death; a hit at the habits of the haughty lord, who sits in the centre of the composition, on a broken sarcophagus, richly sculptured, with other ruins of temple and statues about, to indicate how bad government had overthrown the high civilization of former times. Malatesta is an imposing figure, richly costumed according to the fashion of the latter part of the fifteenth century. His scarlet cap hangs on the limb of a twig, and one hand is protectingly placed on the shoulders of his golden-tressed mistress, whose face is turned beseechingly towards him as he frowns at the messenger from the pope, who is interrupting his dalliance. The lady is refined in figure, decorous and picturesque in dress, handsome, but has the extremities of her feet uncovered, perhaps to denote an humble origin or her loose relation with Malatesta. A skull is held towards him by the pilgrim-ambassador, who bears upon his costume the keys of St. Peter, and the tokens of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Pointing to the death's head, he admonishes the prince that it is bad to live in a condition in which he would not wish to die; a message that is to be read in Latin, as an inscription on an uncovered sarcophagus, overshadowed by a broken image, near the arms of Malatesta.

The picture in itself is beautiful on account of its execution, and the breadth, simplicity, and richness of the composition. Every detail is conscientiously studied from nature; the figures are admirably designed and posed, and the whole painted as the rival of Titian knew how to paint. Intellectually it is equally

a success, for the stern, overbearing tyrant, the threatening pilgrim, and the pleading concubine are thoroughly in character; and it is also one of the numerous examples of the Venetian painters in always treating woman so as to dignify and not to disgrace her, whatever she might be in herself; at all events, to excite chaste admiration of her charms, or sympathy for her misfortunes, and not, as is the modern practice, to incite libidinous feeling or mock at chastity with sardonic unction. The superiority of old art is based almost as much on its morale as its execution and æsthetic constitution. We are apt to overlook the best points in the old masters because of our training to regard only the superficial and external, and especially the meaning and delight that come of a harmony between the subtleties of character and color in compositions of a high range of motives.

*Couture. Delacroix.*

Couture is the opposite of Flandrin; a genuine offspring of French feeling, tempering, however, its sensual bias with the æsthetic requirements of his personal tastes, and making pictures from an intellectual point of view, vitalized by passions and sentiments akin to their themes. Especially is this true of his masterpiece, "The Romans of the Decadence," which best exhibits his quality of genius and highly trained skill. It is an allegory subdued by realistic treatment to the comprehension of every one. Ideal in conception, and avoiding the scenic display and trite conventionalism of the David school, it shows a possible classical debauch, without attaining to the local and historic verity of more recent treatment. Allegory predominates. Similar scenes must have marked the decline of Roman virtue, but this painting rises above the particular spectacle to the realization of the collapse of a mighty empire, and symbolizing the vices and crimes which ruined it.

Couture's æsthetic perceptions were too nice to permit him to indulge in the common trait of making the nude simply unchaste. His figures are voluptuous, but not lewd. Even in intoxication he preserves them from the loathsome by the grandeur of their passions, and those ancestral memories that withhold them from absolute bestiality. They are drunk to the reeling of reason; eyes glisten with thickening films and besotted desires; speech staggers; forms totter; action is growing benumbed by the fatal cup; but the aristocratic mien of the masters of the earth never wholly leaves them. How can it be otherwise in the presence of those grave statues of their fathers that look down upon them

like admonishing visitors of another world? Compared with the lecherous orgies that French art gives of scenes of the Orleans regency and subsequent reign, it is a veritable debauch of gods.

The technical treatment of this effective painting betrays the influence of Veronese, though there is no servile following of any master. It is brilliant and luminous in color, but falls into the not uncommon fault of the school of broken and scattered lights, and a certain fierceness of effect, which comes of fiery blood and strong passions.

The colorists of the French school, with few exceptions, have something repellant and unsatisfactory, particularly in a moral sense, in the tone of their pictures. It is a disturbing, irritating quality. Fleury has it; Décamps less, his best tone being one of solemn magnificence, speaking to the imagination; Diaz displays it in reckless wantonness of brush, luscious and warm, but not as pure as might be; and Delacroix revels in it with fierce delight. Venetian art mastered color, and made it subserve its more noble ideas by an implicit obedience to æsthetic law. But color, with French masters, often runs into riot and fracas.

Delacroix is a great colorist in point of original force, though not the most perfect in practice. It comes of his blood. He thinks, speaks, invents in color. Subjects are chosen to admit of its prodigal use. He discharges it like a burst of fireworks. His pictures overpower by their fury of brush. For it he often neglects design. With the zeal of a revolutionist, he bears the spectator away, or dashes him aside like an impetuous torrent. He treats colors as Buonarotti did design. No pupil can follow him. There is little beauty in it, less grace, no tenderness, and no faith; but everywhere is seen a creative, untiring intellect, surging and foaming in a colored sea of passion.

Delacroix delights in the dark side of life. Famine, imprisonment, martyrdom, the desolations of war, massacres, cruelties, orgies, tragedy; Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello; madness, melancholy, and crime; these are the themes that inspire his brush. To Dante's "Inferno" he turns for choicest topics. Tasso's insanity, Byron's ravings, the society of madmen, or madness turned inward to gnaw upon itself, the latent ferocity of wild beasts, alike charm him. See his tiger's head in the Luxembourg; a mere suggestion in form and color, yet exhibiting the pitiless, blood-dreaming animal in its most sinister aspect. Look at his

"Massacre of Scio" for a revolting accumulation of the horrors of war; nothing pathetic, nothing exalted as patriotism or sublime in resignation, but a revelling in the atrocious, cruel, and ensanguined, without any palliation by way of idealism in design. Instead, every possible heightening of physical horror, with crude, coarse, contrasted, loaded colors, and scattered lights, shocking and confusing the senses. In the neighboring picture of "Dante and Virgil," the anguish of the wretched souls clinging to Charon's bark, looming up in the hellish gloom and glare of the coloring, is unspeakable. A unique but not a pleasant painter, Delacroix! Mythology, instead of beautiful fable, affords him a copious supply of monsters, and slaughter of every variety. He shrinks at and shirks nothing in his terrible laboratory of art, to heighten the impressions of supernatural vehemence, suffering, or strength. His peculiar powers culminate in the "Apollo triumphing over Python," which occupies the post of honor in the ceiling of the Apollo gallery of the Louvre. Here he absolutely creates a light glowing with the fire of the combat. He is borne away by the intensity of his conceptions, he looms up as a great dramatic genius of unbalanced powers, the focus of the strongest and deepest qualities of the national proclivities in art. Like all great artists, he loves space. But he also has the ability to put greatness into small compass. When called on to decorate St. Sulpice or the Chapel St. Denis du St. Sacrament in the Marais, the calmer requirements of religious art failed to temper his impetuous palette. The Virgin is frantic with earthly woe. Mary Magdalen gives herself up to equally tragic sorrow. St. Michael of St. Sulpice is a failure, not so much in color as in those grand qualities of original design which distinguish most of his other work. It recalls Raphael's in idea, but fails notably in comparison with it. But the rush of wind shown in the disturbed curtain in the "Heliodorus," the velocity of the avenging angels as they precipitate themselves through the air, and the vigor of their chastisement are eminently superhuman. The horse, however, is awkwardly done. "Jacob wrestling with the Angel" is also noteworthy for vigor. The herculean strength of the patriarch, as he lifts the angel, is astonishingly rendered. But the painting is confused by the long drawn out caravan of Jacob as it passes in the distance, so that the wrestling seems like side-play, instead of being the great point of the composition. The landscape is imbued with that mysterious sympathy with the scene which constituted the essential element of Titian's "Peter the Martyr."

Delacroix was an enigma to his countrymen at large, for although genuinely French in temperament and thought, his range of imagination was above theirs. He had no sympathy whatever with their worship of the "pretty." The large and terrible pleased him most. If his genius had been qualified by grace; could he have attained harmony in coloring and unity of graduated lights focused to the emphatic point, and given more heed to æsthetic principles in composition, — he might have rivalled Paul Veronese, whom he so admired as to assert that to him he owed everything. As it is, he cannot be called the equal of the brilliant Venetian. Although color was a vital force in him, and also creative design, neither was under perfect control. Draperies are often sketchy, leathery-like, and ill adjusted, encumbering and obscuring rather than suggesting form and life. His great triumphs are in wall-decoration, whether in fresco or oil. But his tints are often dry, crude, dead, lack transparency, and do not harmoniously blend. Flesh-hues in his easel work are apt to be cold and clayey. Lights, too, are confused and scattered. There is also frequent want of unity of tone. His feeling for color is based on passion more than sentiment; splendid, but coarse. Still everything he touches bears a master's solid impress.

Muller's great picture of the "Call of the Condemned" of the Reign of Terror is perhaps the best composed historical painting of our time. None that I know, better fulfils the requirements of this branch of art, as a realistic narrative. It carries the spectator directly into the scene as it must have appeared on that morning when the last of Robespierre's victims were wantonly hurried to the guillotine. Muller drags it bodily out of the past, and puts it before our eyes in its precise truth, without dramatic exaggeration, or attempt to heighten anguish and despair sufficiently intense in their own naked reality. It is a conscientiously told tale. The officials at whose action we are aghast, are justly treated; made men doing a stern duty, not ensanguined monsters. There are fifty masterly pictures, each a pathetic tale by itself; every separate group and individual action diversified in emotion, but filling its place with appropriate feeling in the harmonious whole; all subdued to an appropriate key of light, in fine gradation, centred outside the prison-door, where waits the cart which is fast filling with its dismal load. There is no attempt at an imaginative treatment, as in Couture's picture, but in place of it a picturesque rendering of the spectacle, based upon a thorough study of incidents, costumes, persons,

and locality, with copious variety of action and expression. It is devoid of academic artificiality on the one hand, and of the other extreme of conventional idealism on the other. Sincerity and sympathy are joined to unquestioned skill and rare talent in composition. Delacroix, by his grand manner, writes his autograph all over his work, and we are led to think as much of the artist as his subject. Poussin, Ingrés, and like men, represent systems or theories, and provoke comparisons. Delaroche excites the sentiments by his poetical sense, but his defective style of painting detracts from the enjoyment. Even the Couture which hangs opposite, recalls the studio overmuch as a composition, besides being spotty in high lights, and securing brilliancy at such sacrifice of unity of tone and color as to make it border on the sensational in general effect. Muller attempts nothing that he cannot do thoroughly well and in a quiet, truth-telling manner. His system gives all to art, regardless of exhibiting the artist. The painting is not the highest effort, but it is a success in high art complete in its way. Muller paints history as Motley writes it, picturesquely, and with insight into its emotions.

Compte is a skilful painter of the historical-picturesque, of elegant executive taste, with too much stress on the effective pretty, in fine a clever novelist in color of the Walter Scott order.

Gérome and Meissonnier are painters of the historical-genre type. David tried to paint history as Livy writes it. But these men more nearly resemble acute tourists whose powers of observation and imagination, being well balanced, enable them graphically to depict those scenes which make up the actual life and history of a people. They do not paint ideas, or even emotions, but spectacles. There is a meaning, though, in what Gérome does; often a lesson of deep import, though, like Macaulay or Thiers in history, he may as an artist be more intent on the picture than the principle.

Both are realists, Gérome inclined to the sensual, and Meissonnier, so far as he shows feeling, to the brutal. They neither offend nor captivate by color, but strive for local truth in a cold, prosaic manner. Each is masterly in execution. Gérome often finishes to a degree of brush-polish which leaves his figures like porcelain, a vicious practice which mars his great skill in composing. The "Siamese Ambassadors" is a marvel of pencil finish, but worthless as fine painting. The best of the modern finishers, as we may call those who concentrate their strongest efforts upon dexterity of brush, do not equal early Flemish and Ger-

man work. Van Eyck, Albert Durer, and Holbein surpass them. The old masters, however, did not often waste their skill on inferior motives. If the object was in itself lowly or common, they elevated it by its application, and kept it in its right position and connection with their main topics, in obedience to the canons of high art. One of their paintings is something more than a picture in the modern sense. Too many of our best trained artists are content to find a "subject." Meissonnier is a painter of no higher aim. Gérome does better. His realistic elaboration is not always limited to mere technical triumphs. He evokes the past of Greece, Rome, or France, in their happiest effects of architecture, costume, and scene, with the same vivid reality with which he paints subjects whose accuracy we are able to test by our own observation. For his capacity of keen humor, witness the "Augurs." Rarely are learning and skill better united, though his intellectual discernment is not of the highest character. Still his is the true method of illustrative history. The idealism is strictly confined to its legitimate purpose of beauty as defined by classic art, while the motives are drawn from actual life, facts, or myths, and treated in their natural or probable aspect. By this system, while availing himself of all that is useful in academic rules, he makes them conform to real life. In other words, he substitutes the varied natural for the monotonous conventional. The fundamental principles of academic teaching are right, because they recognize truth and beauty as the vital forces of art. But in practice it has long gone wrong, narrowing itself to formalism, and reproducing itself, generation after generation, in forms of increasing weakness and worthlessness. Among the modern men of whom Gérome is so illustrious an example, it has come to be an established axiom, that mere beauty of form, harmony of composition, and like laws of æsthetic taste as defined by academic practice do not in themselves fulfil its entire purpose, but that to them must be adjoined the vital facts and spirit of nature. This is their root of success. It was that of the old men. Intervening schools neglected the substance for the shadow, and a common inanity appears in them all. No more washy phantoms, no more skin-deep painting, no more making of lines and hues the finality of art, but consummate work as the abode of informing spirit, the old law of art restored to its legitimate supremacy; such is the code of modern reformers. It is an offshoot of the revival of correct principles, which has

begun to bear pleasant fruit for our century, and marks its sympathy with the mediæval mind in its progress towards perfect work.

The chief merit of Gérome lies in his apprehension of old truths, and his patient, skilful application of them with the advantages which modern science gives him. There are, however, some things wanting, not only in him, but the French school as as a body. First, color, as language or feeling. Gérome has no sentiment of color. Secondly, its nudity is unchaste. The severe purity of the Greek and Italian masters in their management of the naked figure, presenting it as an exquisite poem, or even when treating the sensual, making it a divine instinct or a grand passion, finds no counterpart in the French mind. That chiefly sees the human figure from its voluptuous and animal aspect. If modesty be attempted, it is a counterfeit virtue; an additional seduction, the more complete by betraying the sensual bias of the artist's brush. When not unchaste, it is given overmuch to kindred passions, or the exhibition of force and a taste for blood. Hence its too apparent delight in the cruel and terrible; watching human suffering with an amateur's relish, and the joy it finds, as in Doré, in the fiendish, grotesque, obscene, and supernatural-hellish. But more on these abnormal phases later. I am now led by the dubious example of Gérome as the great sensualist of the school to point out its demoralizing tendencies. It may be objected that it is unfair to select a conspicuous artist of any sort as a representative man. On the contrary, I hold it to be reasonable and just. All great men are national types. In other words, they are the culmination of certain national proclivities. In art Michael Angelo represents the highest Etruscan elements, Albert Durer the German, Rubens the Flemish, Turner the English, Delacroix the French. Whatever is instinctive or inbred in the race is sure to find expression in its art; great in great men, little in little men, mean in mean men, evil in evil men, in all good or bad according to the soil.

Baudry and his class are a revival of the wide-spread feeling for the lascivious-pretty of the Boucher coterie of the last century, with greater fascination of coloring and style. Wantonness of this sort is far from being eliminated. Indeed, it bids fair at present, by a revived love of the nude, to become more deleterious than ever. Until there is a radical purification of the French temperament, it cannot be trusted with the nude any more than

it can be with sacred or serious themes. It degrades it into the lascivious or sensual, unless, as with Delacroix, overpowered by another passion, it strips it of grace and beauty. Once the Latin races thought of the human figure only how they could exalt and purify it by art, and make it more divine. Even passion was lifted to the clouds, not trampled in the mire. The ascetics sought to extinguish it entirely, a mistake as fatal as the opposite extreme in its ultimate consequences on character, but in art sinning on the side of purity. Even the debauched Renaissance, with all its countless sins of infidelity and prolific art-sensuality, was slow in descending to the directly obscene and vulgar, being retarded by its æsthetic instincts. But French art largely plants itself on the sensual, diversified, it is true, by an *esprit* or wit which is born of the devilish-intellectual, inoculated with the obscene. This aspect is too revolting to be enlarged upon. Even in Paris it is more or less driven by the authorities into cover. But the coquettish-lascivious, having triumphed over the mock-heroics of the Davidites, now openly appears without rebuke. It is not simply tolerated, but sustained by a patronage which pure art in vain seeks. Sexual charms are made more tempting by lascivious devices of drapery more immodest than nakedness. If a subject be sought from history as an excuse for obscenity, it is taken, like that of Schaeffer's "Henry II. Fête," from a spectacle of lewd debauchery which would now consign every participitant to a penitentiary. Why should art be free to strip ladies naked, mount them with lascivious gestures on cattle, surround them with the rakes of society, who, applauding, drive them before them into the town either of Blois in the 16th century or Paris in the 19th? The real scene, no doubt, shocked even mediæval laxity. France of to-day, under the sanction of the government, is invited to admire the corrupt canvas.

If the whole nude is done like Baudry's silly "Diana," — a tempting piece of flesh-tinting, — the goddess of chastity is rendered with her divine attribute omitted, and transformed into a wanton coquette. As individual art, however, all of the above character is too frivolous and worthless to possess more than a passing influence, though unhappily its tendency is to rapid propagation. The more solid sensual brush of Gérome has a deeper significance. "King Caudaules," "Phryne before the Areopagus," "Alcibiades with Lais," the "Almeh," and other similar paintings, seem intended to be the opposite in effect of the Greek

nude, to incarnate womanhood in a perfect form, and thus suggest its divinest attributes, making, as with the "Venus de Milo," chastity so complete, that the idea of nudity never presents itself; but to show off the voluptuous attractions of impure women, exhibiting them as prize-animals for amorous men to gloat over. The greater the technical achievement, the more dangerous the painting. Art can dishonor as well as honor a country.

Further to illustrate the varied expression given to subjects in which the sensual passion is directly embodied, look at the several treatments of the common topic of the "Temptation of St. Anthony" by the Italian, Dutch, and French painters. The first bring the physical attractions seductively but modestly into play. A vision of a beautiful woman disturbs the ascetic solitude of the saint. If he fall, it will be as much because of the instinct for companionship implanted in him by his Creator as from sexual feeling, which is kept out of sight, though suggested. The Dutchman surrounds him with obscene demons and delirium-tremens visions, in which a fiend-woman appears. No danger of fall of the saint with such diabolical imagery to warn "hands off." Our Frenchman provokes his appetites by carnal attitudes and charms he borrows from models lost to self-respect.

It is not agreeable to be thus called upon to indict before public opinion a great school of art for offences against morality, and consequently against civilization, but the prominence given to carnality is too marked to be overlooked. United to an almost equal love for military motives, and those based on physical force and exhibition of the baser passions, it demonstrates a low feeling among amateurs and artists. This is further illustrated by the national preference of the Dutch school over the Italian, and the popularity of those artists who, like Meissonnier, follow its lead, and make no call on the intellects of their countrymen, by way of suggestion of ideas or facts calculated to elevate their minds in any sense. These men give themselves up to microscopic painting, resolving everything into the minute, with marvellous accuracy of design, firmness of touch, and elaborate finish. Meissonnier is vigorous and little. He adds to the curiosities of easel-work, but not to its greatness. As talent it is almost perfect of its kind, but nothing new or commendable. Gérome can beat him on his own ground, but he does not rest content with finished nothingness. I refer to Meissonnier chiefly to call attention to his generally low range of motives. These are the military-genre, combats, quarrels, and

crime. Sometimes he rises to the level of peaceful games, a friendly glass of liquor, or similar commonplaces. Unlike Gérome, he has no power of acute characterization. To exhibit his skill of hand seems to be the ruling motive. Schreyer's "Artillery Charge" of the *Salon* of 1865 is a splendid example of broad and natural treatment of the military-genre, as full of life as Meissonnier's pictures are the reverse.

Although I have alluded to the French fondness for Dutch art, I must do the school the justice to state that it never descends to the level of the Dutch liking for debauchery, drinking-bouts, and their attendant fracases. The love of the pretty does good service in preserving it from this lowest stage of materialism. Neither do we find among the Dutchmen the amateur taste for suffering and lighter vices which obtain with their Gallic neighbors. Both schools are firmly set upon the material plane of art as distinguished from the ideal or spiritual, and each finds in the other something it is without in itself. I do not mean that idealism or spirituality is not represented in French art. They are but as exceptions to its general current. The *spirituel* element is a saving grace, and gilds much that would be purely offensive without it. Yet this subtile attraction and the artistic work of a few skilled men must not lead us to overlook the externality of the ordinary genre-painters of France, and indeed of many others. Their grave shortcomings are want of seriousness, faith, and high purpose. They coquette with art as with a mistress, using it alternately for their necessities or their entertainment. A fundamental feeling for the decorative overrules all. Next to that it is best satisfied with being charming. It loves also to illustrate and to amuse. In caricature, however, it has little real wit, being given to grossness, exaggeration, and distortion, which it mistakes for it. Rarely does it recognize things spiritual; almost never those universal ethics that teach humanity and inspire it with fresh hopes or resignation. Neither has it political aspirations. Much that it might express as freely and eloquently as does its sister-art, literature, it omits to do. Fashion, power, and the purse are its chief stimulants. It would be unjust to lay all its sins of omission at the door of the government; for until the experiment is fairly tried, it cannot know how far its liberty of action extends. The common drift is towards things trivial and superficial. The body of man is more recognized than his soul by the average of artists; but their art is spiced with sufficient in-

tellect to preserve it from wholesale corruption. If the inspiration derived from the government was of a higher character, doubtless art would be put on a superior basis. But before there can be any radical, permanent change in its moral tone, the heart of the nation must be purified. Technically the school has much wherewith to congratulate itself. In this direction there has been entire freedom of experiment and progress. Improvement since the last century is varied and rapid. In style, manner, and subject, the school is versatile and accomplished. Science is largely put into contribution for its material advancement. But overmuch work is prompted by vanity or desire of gain. Great names are seen to grow careless of their reputations, so that their purses are filled. Above all, the vice of painting "*de chic*," indifferent to truth for the sake of a transient effect, obtains. In treating thus of a school whose annual exhibitions number new works by thousands, the generalization is necessarily broad, and the coloring shown is of the mass. But continued familiarity with it convinces me that these observations are in the main just.

Desgoffe, the painter of still life, for thorough imitation of jewels, tapestries, objects of art, and precious things in general, — he never wastes time on things vulgar, — excels even Dutchmen. Perfect in design, truthful in color, finished to microscopic exactness of detail, he leaves the spectator nothing to desire in these respects. But it is unsatisfactory painting. The impression is of intense labor and Chinese profitless endurance at imitation. There is no vital sense of the things given. They are flat, hard-polished, dumb counterfeits. Philippe Rousseau, in the same line, with a freer brush restores the consciousness of the things themselves to us, which is a more genuine triumph.

Fromentin's ambition has led him to hitherto untrodden fields. His observation is broad and felicitous. He transfers Arab life, wild and picturesque, to his canvases. We enjoy the freedom of the desert, and rejoice at escaping the confinement and artifice of the studio. Décamps brought back from the East a mystic sense of its coloring and antiquity, solemn and magnificent in his profoundest work, partaking of the feeling of prophecy; a seer's intuition into its latent meaning. The poetry also of the Orient possessed his brush. Not so with Fromentin. His pulses beat quick music to its surrounding life. He sees its untamable activity of nomad existence; the splendid development that it bestows upon the phys-

ical man; its modern realistic aspect on its bright and story-telling side. The ringing gallop of his high-bred Arab horses, obedient to the sympathetic action of their sheik riders as they pursue their chase, are vividly given. There is no unworthy trick of pencil or straining after effect, but conscientious, rapid, and telling painting. Something is wanting in his qualities of atmosphere, which is apt to be thick and unbreathable, and of his still water, which too much resembles ice, but these are deficiencies scarcely felt in the healthy *ensemble* of his work.

Another class is also seeking truth in a quite new direction, taking themes from common and domestic life. The affections, interests, feelings, and realities of the people are its choice. If it has taken the French school two centuries to comprehend the value of Nature as a teacher, it has also taken it equally long to find out there was a people to paint for, and to supply its easels with topics homely in most part but every way more honest and wholesome than those to which it had been devoted ever since it had had an existence. This new phase is democratic, just as that of Baudry and Winterhalter is aristocratic. The demoralizing pettiness and falsity of the one, born of the self-indulgence and *blasé* existence of fashion, is now offset by the natural sentiments and genuine sympathies of the other, based upon the broad foundation of the lives of those who constitute the real strength of the nation; a late but necessary recognition of their being. In this recent phase of painting, which may be called the domestic-genre, the French have lifted their art much above that which responds to it in the Dutch school. Its delight was in exhibiting the vulgar triumph of riches and the coarse pleasures of the poor. But Frére, Mèrle, H. Browne, Millet, and their followers, with finer taste and purer feeling, take a higher view of humanity. Avoiding the sensual and frivolous they rely upon the better instincts, sentiments, and affections to attract sympathy and admiration. We need not, however, mistake them for philanthropists or philosophers. They simply understand their times better than other artists, and seek their motives partly from sympathy and partly because of their novelty and freshness. At bottom, however, it is a concession which the growing democratic spirit of the nation has exacted of its vitiated, aristocratic art. Unspeakable good it might do could it attain that purity of purpose which would lead it to devote itself to the cause of the lowly and unfortunate; seeking to enlist society at large in the work of

amelioration of those social and civil evils which are at once the seed and the fruit of human injustice. Art, like literature, can do good work in this direction. But to effect this the artist must have a worthier aim than merely to render local truth for the sake of the picturesque or an effective tableau, leaving the heart untouched and the mind uninstructed. Genre of this character destroys living art by replacing it with the lifeless. The volatile temperament of the French race causes a fear that the present promise, like a temporary fashion, may pass without leaving any permanent impression.

Unfortunately Frére, Mèrle, and Henrietta Browne are not colorists. They have not the ability to reproduce the mood or feeling which underlies their subjects. To imitate local color, rendering blue for blue, red for red, making shadow and gradation transparent and correct, is clever work, but it does not of itself infuse sentiment and speech into the painting. The average coloring of these artists is unsympathetic and meaningless. Browne is strong but heavy. Their merits are chiefly confined to motives and design. Hence photographs and engravings give a much higher idea of them than their pictures.

*Jules Breton. Millet.*

Jules Breton and Millet, however, are born colorists. In choice of subjects Millet is a realist, but a poet in his management of color. His manner is broad, vigorous, and impassioned in a low key. He is in sympathy with the work of peasants and hard labor of every sort, as was Troyon with field-toil and kine — also a true son of the earth, powerful in design and weighty in expression, his color giving emphasis to his thought and inciting the imagination of the spectator. Millet's style suggests greater qualities than he actually possesses. Nevertheless he is a man of mark, and succeeds in impressing his own nature deeply on his pictures.

With less force of imagination and a less decisive sweep of the brush, Jules Breton has more refinement, equal simplicity and breadth of composition, greater delicacy of taste, and a higher purpose to his art. It lacks that complete fusion, and low, tender harmony of tints which makes Millet's work always serene and sometimes solemn in feeling, but excels in light and atmosphere. His "Evening" at the Luxembourg might readily be mistaken for a picture by Millet, it is so largely treated and so closely toned down to his standard. But the pensiveness and subtle concentration of light upon the central interest of the composition are markedly his own qualities. Jules Breton is a

lyric poet of no common cast. His "Summer's Evening" is a masterpiece in a vein of feeling usual to him but rare in any school, and which honors human nature wherever it exists. Millet appears best satisfied when he has come up to his executive standard of painting. Breton does not find that enough. He has in reserve a soul that must likewise have its fitting word. The "Summer's Evening" is a simple composition, quiet and strong as truth itself. Peasant women have just ceased their labors of haymaking, and, warned by the setting sun which covers them as with an atmosphere of celestial hope, have clustered together preparatory to going to their homes. Amid the sweet-scented hay-cocks, there stand, like priestesses of the harvest about to offer up an evening hymn, two mature women resting on their rakes, stalwart yet feminine figures, with the possibilities of the Madonna in their sexhood. Beside them a wrinkled grandmother with sinews hardened by a long life of field toil; a wearied mother nursing her new-born infant; and a fair young girl, overcome by the heat, is sleeping on a pile of fresh-mown grass, soothed by the hum of the twilight insects: these make up the central picture. In the distance are seen their rude homes. The figures, costumes, and landscape are closely drawn after nature. The painting, modelling, and particularly the management of light, are of high order. But these merits are its least recommendation. An aroma of a summer's sunset floats on the quiet evening air. The fragrance of meadow flowers and new hay mingles with human sympathies and hopes, as the last glow of daylight brightens those silent figures whose story creeps into our hearts. But the chord which vibrates deepest is the brooding sadness, mingled with that inquiring look towards the sinking sun, as if labor asked to know its future. Must it always be thus? it seems to inquire of God. Those overworked, strong-limbed peasants may not feel so in their native fields, but Breton makes us anticipate the pertinent question: whether a poor woman's lot shall always continue to be an incessant round of hard manual toil in civilized France?

Breton's types of figures are uncommonly good. There is no trace of vulgarity, such as Millet yields to. Neither are they idealized beyond the limits that Nature herself permits under the artist's chosen conditions. Unless Breton was refined as well as truthful he could not plead so effectively as he does for humanity. He demands of the spectator to respect labor, the

while making the landscape lovely in sentiment as well as natural in features.

Before speaking of the landscapists proper, I have to record another example of sincere work after an original manner in a semi-symbolic, semi-realistic painting of the "Virgin and the Infant Jesus," by Lambron, a scholar of Flandrin. The motive, taken from the apocryphal Evangile of the Young Jesus, reads, "As the Virgin rested herself in the fields with Jesus, the birds and animals came and gazed upon the divine child." The picture is flat, wants atmosphere and shadow; lines of drapery are somewhat heavy, and there is overmuch rigidity of posture. But its merits are strikingly novel. It is firmly painted, in clear, pure, bright colors, as the religious-minded Lorenzo da Credi was wont to paint, large and simple in composition, the design and tone in keeping with the motive. In the distance are the towers of an oriental town. A steep, green hill-side, rising to a sharply defined horizon, occupies the chief part of the picture. In the centre is a solitary tree. The masses are broadly indicated, according to the fifteenth century practice of the purists, and the accessories beautifully finished. The Virgin reclines amid a bed of flowers, with her infant sitting in front, watching the birds and animals that are divinely attracted towards Him by the power of his love to draw all things to itself. Jesus has the forecasting expression, instructive of his final sacrifice, which the great religious masters give Him even while in his mother's arms, and is devoutly and seriously treated in all respects, his type of figure being noble. But the great success is the Virgin. To avoid repeating the time-worn effigies of past art in returning to a field trodden by thousands of artists during sixteen centuries, was in itself not any easy thing. Lambron accomplishes more. To the barren, religious art of the nineteenth century, he gives a fresh and pure type of the Madonna: stately and loving, every instinct of woman in subjection to a holy will, without ascetic drawback; an intellectual, free, self-controlled woman, fit to bring forth a Redeemer.

*Lambron's "Virgin."*

Contrast this solitary example of sound religious art with the vapid plagiarisms at third hand of Signol, who aims at resuscitating the emptiness of Poussin and Le Sueur, or the "Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise," by Carbarel, whose ruffianly figures and sugary, meretricious painting, although done with masterly dash, are a sardonic grimace at

things sacred, and only adapted to a "Biche aux Bois" audience. This species of levity and mockery is so spontaneous and general in much of the French treatment of serious subjects as to seem unconsciously done, so far as sacrilege or disrespect is positively intended. But the spiritual callousness that prompts it, be it grounded in carelessness or malice, is fatal to all serious art.

The French school is constantly going to antipodal extremes. If Lambron's picture may be considered the herald of something new, elevated, and beautiful, we find his opposite in Manet, the painter-in-chief of Ugliness, which in sincere self-delusion he exalts into a worship. It seems to be a fixed principle with him to make the most promising subjects for beauty — as his "Olympia," for instance, which motive a Titian or Correggio would have transformed into a masterpiece of æsthetic joy — the combination of all that is most disagreeable in painting. This abnormal picture was exhibited in the *Salon* of 1865, much to the wonderment and disgust of the many and to the admiration of a choice few, whose tastes were as eccentric as the artist's. "Olympia" was naked, but as her flesh was of the hue of green meat, there was nothing corrupting to the public morals in the gross display of her flaccid charms. She was of no mundane type of feature or figure. Her form was coarser, if possible, than a Tierra del Fuegian belle's. A negress stood grinning in the background, and a witch-cat with her black back up, in the foreground. These accessories gave a grotesque hideousness to the whole. Yet there were indications of talent and a certain spotty force of splashy contrasts of coloring, which might be trained to better work. Manet is one of the eccentricities of modern art, as Whistler is another but better variety, induced by the popular love of the sensational and extravagant. Wasted talent and perversity of taste of this kind tends to bring art into ridicule. Frequently it outrages the moral sentiments, as is done by Manet's companion picture to "Olympia," "Jesus insulted by Soldiers," an exhibition of ribald ferocity, united to brutal coarseness of brush. Ribot's style of religious composition is less objectionable, because he models better and paints sincerely upon a dark unrefined key of his own in keeping with his gloomy subjects and forcible style. His "St. Sebastian" has none of the aspect of the handsome martyr that tradition makes him, but is a burly, muscular Spanish smuggler, whose gaping wounds are cared for by monks of the same rough type. It is

not wise to revive the ascetic ferocity of the Ribera and Carravaggio school, but if intended as a protest against the prevailing meretricious pretty, it is not without use.

There has been no serious attempt at landscape painting in a realistic sense before the present generation. Indeed, landscape art proper is a modern idea. The heroic landscape of the Poussinites, besides being only an offshoot of the later Bolognese school, had little real nature in it, but was like epic poems of the Homeric order, or nature transcendentalized to fit the pseudo-classical tastes of the studio. Neither did the weak, pale backgrounds of the Louis XV. time represent nature with any greater fidelity, or pretend to aught else than to give suitable localities for aristocratic picnics and lascivious playgrounds for the ribboned and satin-clad shepherds and shepherdesses of the Watteau fabrication. David and his pupils were possessed with the classic disrelish or indifference to it. Consequently it makes no show with them. Even now there is no extended hearty liking of the landscape among the French, as in England and America. That which exists is narrow in taste, confined chiefly to the picturesque, or the flat and low, — fields, pastures, and orchards being the favorite subjects. There is some fancy but not much genuine poetry in this feeling. It is in the main associated with kine, fatness, and productiveness. Few beside Fromentin and Décamps travel to the East in quest of more knowledge and a wider range of motives. There is no counterpart here to the enterprise of the English; no thorough students like Turner, untiring in search of artistic truth, and cosmopolite in his love of nature. Still less do we find an ambition like the American, which sends its students to Labrador and the Arctic regions, to study icebergs and polar scenery, or takes them to the hottest tropics, exploring the Andes, the Cordilleras, and the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, in quest of the strange, grand, and beautiful. In French art there is scant recognition of mountains. The ocean is no better known. There are many pictures in which what is intended for the sea is introduced. But can anything be more unlike its slumberous repose or tempestuous wrath than the viscid absurdities of Géricault, Gudin, and their followers? L'Hariden gives something of its sentiment in the long-drawn breaths of its playful moods, as it tosses and foams on the beach-sands. Distance, a receding horizon, and liquidity, are to be found in the picture referred to. Ordinarily a French marine painter's idea of a gale is wholly of the perpendicular order.

He piles droll masses of gutta-percha waves, literally mountains high in his canvas, performing gymnastic exploits which would bring down the applause of the circus, but which have nothing in common with Nature's movements. When the maniacal and tragic are not essayed, the artist subsides into the melo-dramatic, or superfine.

A fertile source of this incongruity is due to Parisian centralization. Being the sole arbitress of fame and fortune, it has come at last to supersede nature in its influence over art. The ideas of the masses on most subjects come from the theatres. Sacred history itself is travestied to amuse, as is evinced by the popular drama of "Paradise Lost," with its twelve great spectacles of the Fall of the Angels, Hell, Paradise, Death of Abel, Divine Justice, Children of Cain, the Deluge, and like tableaux, in which are introduced "*pluie naturelle et effet hydropatique*," invented and patented by M. Delaporte, one Mr. Dumaine filling the *rôle* of Satan.

At the Robin Theatre, the people are shown, according to the advertisements, how the "ocean is formed, its mysterious depths, its convulsions, phenomena, productions, habitants, submarine panorama all over the globe," nightly by gas-light.

It is unnecessary to multiply proof of the Parisian habitude of taking their conceptions of nature and life from the stage. How tempting to the artist to be instructed and amused at once without going out of his Eden. "Natural rain" too, patented, under the roof, warranted not to wet! What an advantage to have the ocean brought to him for one franc, he comfortably seated exploring its phenomena!

Nature resents toying. To know her we must join hands with her. But give up the town for the country for the purpose of honest study, is what few Frenchmen are equal to. Even for the finest illustrations of their own beautiful river scenery and their landscape at large, they are indebted to the enterprise of English artists. What can be learned of the sea, in a few sultry weeks spent at a channel port, or of the land in a cursory ramble after subjects, to be worked up into landscapes within the walls of city studios? Instead of seeking the variety of nature in its own haunts, they pick up a few of her most obvious truths which are fettered into theoretical painting — for the French artist is much given to theory in regard to nature — or used at random "*de chic*." Such is the ordinary practice. Hence the weakness of their landscape-art; and if strong,

its narrow limits and monotonous expression. The talent and science of French landscapists, if supported by an equal feeling and sincerity of purpose, would place the school on a firm and high footing. In the degree that this is done the results are encouraging. A few men have begun to find the right paths. The French people should be grateful to Lambinet, Daubigny, Auguste Bonheur, Théodore Rousseau, Diaz, and Corot for opening new sources of happiness by introducing them for the first time to genuine landscape-art.

*The Landscapists.*

Bonheur is a hearty realistic painter, fresh in color, healthful in feeling, with an out-door consciousness of work about his pictures, not imaginative, inclined to the literal, but possessing the ability — in which his sister is deficient — of giving vitality to his work.

Lambinet is a man of less power, but in his limited choice of lowland scenery, natural and simple; having a refined taste and defined execution, suggesting details by emphasis of brush rather than by accurate finish. He fills his pictures with clear, bright light, rivalling Nature's tones as fully as pigments may. But it is a hazardous process, and no way so satisfactory as the lower tone of Corot, whose treatment of light is unequalled. Those who follow Lambinet in this respect would do well to recall Leonardo's maxim in regard to pure white, "Use it as if it were a gem." Lambinet's landscape, although ever repeating himself, is fresh and fragrant, like a bouquet of flowers.

Daubigny works in the same vein, but he is weaker and prone to superficiality. The greens of all of these men are well felt, showing the direct influence of nature. Rousseau is a more subtle artist. His coloring is deeper and richer, and he recognizes sentiment in things, while Lambinet and Daubigny stop at the external features. Their matter-of-fact work is admirable, as far as it goes, like any well-given description; but Rousseau adds the poetical sense to his. This is also true of the versatile, unequal, impetuous Diaz, a brilliant colorist by blood, so much so as to obscure design, but charming in his genre-landscape motives, in which he introduces little children, lovely women, or classical nymphs, *amorini*, or whatever best affords him scope for his rich flest-tints, in contrast with magnificently colored draperies or the deep greens and browns of vegetation. His fancy is peculiarly delicate and playful, not serious, which is a defect, because the want of earnestness of purpose seems to have prevented him from realizing complete returns of his uncommon promise.

Corot stands apart. Critics call him a master. In some respects he is one, who was much needed in his school, or indeed in any other, as a counter-weight to the prevalent materialism. He is no profuse colorist. Browns, pale greens, and silvery grays, with an occasional shade of purple or a bright spot of intenser colors to represent flowers or drapery, are his reliance. Vegetation or figures, which he uses sparsely, are thin masses or washes of color, with only a shadowy resemblance to the things indicated. But Corot is a poet. Nature is subjective to his mental vision. He is no seer, is not profound; but is sensitive and, as it were, clairvoyant, seeing the spirit more than the forms of things. There is a bewitching mystery and suggestiveness in his apprehension of the landscape, united to a pensive joyousness and absorption of self in the scene, that is very uncommon in his race. Calame, who is Swiss, has it in a more robust way; Doré also of another kind. This obliviousness of selfhood is an important element in truly great work. Corot's paintings challenge no carping criticism. Their tendency is to make one forget it in tranquil enjoyment. They fall upon the eye as distant melody upon the ear, captivating the senses and inspiring the sentiments. Contemplation, too, and sympathetic reception of Nature's language are quickened by his compositions. They are no transcripts of scenery, but pictures of the mind. To soothe, to give repose, to evoke dreamy sentiment, such is their mission. Not that there is any peculiarly Christian idea in them. This spirit is rather pantheistic, and shows a sympathy with *amorini*, nymphs, and the Greek's delight in nature because of her mysterious beauty of sunlight and shadow, in a subdued way, as if in the presence of gods. Corot can never be popular in France, for he is too much removed from the common characteristics of the nation. He is not materialistic enough. His solitude is too calm. His *amorini* are not lusty or amorous, but flit through his copses like ethereal butterflies. Twilights charm him greatly, always silvery-toned and bordering on the shadowy boundary that separates the visible from the invisible, and suggesting the inscrutable. The consummate success lies in his management of light. With him it is genius. Nature knows herself in this in his painting, as a beautiful woman knows her face in a glass. Water, which he loves next to light, glimmers and sparkles under its rays. Shadows and reflections are alive with it. The densest vegetation opens before it. Everywhere light penetrates without re-

*Corot.*

minder of either brush or pigment. Corot is the painter of air; as great a gift to art in his manner as was that of Claude of unveiled sunshine in his.

Antagonistic in style to Corot, is Courbet, whose material force is overwhelming when he chooses. He is the strongest, the truest, and most satisfying of the realists, a Robert Browning of the easel. There are no such local greens, grays, lights and shadows as his; no firmer sense of material forms and uses of things; none more vigorous or more harmonious in his own interpretation of nature. He puts the spectator in absolute, organic relationship to it. Courbet's qualities are great, like those of Walt Whitman, who is an American Courbet in verse; but the best qualities of both are obscured or affrontively obtruded by a sort of Titanesque realism, which affects the gross and material, as it were, to emphasize their introspective view into the primary elements of nature and man. Each sings the Earth earthy, and with such heartiness and comprehension, as to move our imaginations to a muscular grasp of her stores of enjoyment. Courbet at times may be coarse, but his style, compared with the popular pretty, is as the uncut diamond beside the tinsel gem.

*Doré.*

Doré is an original genius, of a quality and calibre widely differing from all the preceding ones. He represents in their intensest degree the chief fundamental characteristics of his race. Indeed, we must view him as a modern outbreak of the old fecund Gothic invention, which in mediæval times delighted so hugely in the grotesque, especially in sculpture, reckless of purity of thought or fitness of application. The ancient spirit was a serious one in one sense. It did these odd things because it delighted in them. But Doré does them from levity, scorn, and contempt. He likes them too, but in another way. His is a strange genius. Mediæval idiosyncrasies of thought and belief are mingled with modern infidelity and jest. In all, however, Doré is thoroughly French. No other nation would have produced him. As well might one look for an Albert Durer or a Shakespeare from Gallic stock as a Doré from German or English. In one respect he is antagonistic to his origin. There is no sympathy in him for the pretty. The beautiful he wholly ignores, and with it academic order and rule. His æsthetic sense runs in a dark direction. He has burst upon the art-world with a prodigality of execution that overwhelms it with surprise. It is hazardous to undertake to analyze the gifts

of a man who, at only thirty-two years of age, had made nearly fifty thousand designs and won universal fame; who is cosmopolitan in his choice of subjects; as familiar with the great writers of England, Germany, Italy, and Spain, as with his own, and finally laid the whole Orient under contribution by illustrating anew for the nineteenth century the Bible. Moreover he claims rank as a painter.

In this character I will first examine him. By instinct he is a profound colorist, because his nature is profound, but he has not yet won that mastery over materials which belongs only to long and steady practice. The qualities of mind and execution which appear in his designs are reproduced in his paintings. Color echoes his feeling or want of it, as may be. It is not held fast to local truth, but is made an outlook of his inmost motive. His "Spanish Gypsy" exemplifies his system. We all remember Murillo's lousy boys with their dirt-ingrained skins, rags, and filthy occupations. His coloring was toned to the dirtiness of the subject, and by itself would have been disagreeable. But Murillo made the life-giving sunlight, the Father's gift to rich and poor alike, fall full upon his beggars. It is their saving grace; all that wins our sympathy comes of it. But Doré's proclivities are so intense that his art must run to extremes. His wretched "Gypsy" has no beauty except a dusky olive complexion, and that harsh in tone. Her rags are loathsomely gathered about her. Unmitigated vagabondism and pitiless poverty are stamped upon her entire figure as she leans in hardened endurance against a stone wall, sunless and companionless. The quality of coloring is literally filthy, as is the subject: coarse beyond description, and intensified by an emphatic crimson spot on her bosom; a bit of red drapery in showing, but signifying the lust of sense or crime at heart. No good comes of such art.

If the predominant trait of Delacroix was physical force, that of Doré is fiendish horror. That which devils most enjoy he most heartily depicts. Added to this is a fecundity of invention and a darksome flow of creative invention which places him the foremost of his terrible kind. Even Dante, reared in mediæval notions of theology and politics, finds some springs of tenderness and always of faith, in his soul; but Doré, in translating his "Inferno" into pictorial French, discards all humanity, and presents the horrors of the Dantesque imagery in forms more appalling than the original. The advanced theories of peace and good-

will to men of our century make no impression on him. Before his advent we had no entirely adequate conception of diabolism. Other interpreters of Dante, Orgagna and Michael Angelo, for instance, had given us glimpses of its features in a grand way, but it has been reserved to Doré to let us into its utter horror. He finds in it a satisfaction akin in depth to the intensity of ecstacy which prompted the celestial visions of Fra Angelico. It is no coldly studied design, but a spontaneous outflow, like seething lava. Alike remarkable is the unceasing activity of his phantom creations. They are supernaturally endowed with vitality. He transforms all nature into demoniacal forces in keeping with weird scenery evoked by his imagination. In the "Wandering Jew," untrammelled by necessity of illustrating the ideas of another, he gives his own freer play. The powers of darkness are let loose. Heaven itself catches the vindictive spirit of hell. This is art undergoing the delirium tremens, with ravings as blasphemous as they are foul and hideous. This may seem harsh judgment, but an art that distorts and misrepresents the divine attributes, engendering hate or fear in place of love and charity, is not one to be dealt gingerly with. A sensitive imagination cannot look it over without risk of nightmare. In almost every sense it is unwholesome art. Coupled with the cruelty that enjoys human suffering in its most excruciating conditions, and peoples the world with fiends whose bestial grotesqueness of shape and ferocity of torment makes one shudder, is a coarse obscenity and a witty licentiousness, the *spirituel* element in its mocking aspect, which comes naturally in such company. The lascivious-pretty is not found in his compositions. Doré intellect is too deep for light sins. With him there is no innuendo, dainty disguise, or tempting display, but plain, outspoken passion and lust and indifference to virtue. The four hundred and twenty-five cuts of the "Contes Drolatiques" form a unique monument to his brilliant debauchery of design: a consuming fire to the weak in morals, a wonderful master-work of invention to the well-trained brain which can appreciate its wit and satire without being contaminated by its smut, and an object of disgust to the one-sided pious mind.

Doré seems to have faith of no kind. His mental vision explores behind the material veil of creation as freely as his natural eye sees the moving panorama around it. But the world seen and unseen is to him simply a field from which to cull motives for his extraordinary powers. He belongs to no fixed time.

The mediæval spirit of the grotesque is as fresh within him as the sense of modern caricature. The supernatural element annihilates time, making him as much at home in the scenes of Oriental life, as recorded in the Bible, as if he had passed them in actual review. But there is no religious sentiment in it. Its force is expended on the graphic-realistic or the imaginative creative of the supernal cast. A fine example of the latter is the seven-headed beast of the Apocalypse rising out of the sea. The mystical Scriptures are his most fitting sphere of invention. He excels also whenever free to compose wholly from his imagination on its dark side. The Deluge, Crucifixion, Passage of the Red Sea, Lives of Moses and the Prophets, are the topics on which his energy, originality, variety, and picturesque largeness of loosely jointed composition are best displayed. He is weak and conventional in those based directly upon the simpler religious sentiments. Fra Angelico could not paint a devil; Doré cannot draw a saint. His illustrations of the Bible are a record of his strongest and weakest qualities. He is not many-sided. But in his own wide field, including the darker aspect of creation, natural and supernal, and up to a certain point the picturesque and sublime in realistic action, he is supreme. The most and almost the sole humane sympathy he exhibits is a certain liking for children, but this only in their dubious sports. He is a pitiless destroyer of the humane and refined in general. His intensest delight is got from terror, suffering, horror, jesting, and dishonor. Perhaps he seeks by sheer force of caricature and exaggeration to carry the mind over from vice to virtue, on the principle that extremes meet. But it is a dubious charity towards him at the best, as, if meant, it would be a crooked way to reach the good. There is too evident pleasure shown in the elfish for its own sake, contempt of mankind, indulgence in the scornful, indecent, and satirical, a relish of ugliness, and an appetite for the loathsomeness of disease, and pride in the superhuman fiendish, to be altogether palliated by the usual apologies for misdirected genius. Doré makes love, pity, charity, and faith absurd. Under his influence one feels that honest emotions or any traits of common humanity, much less piety, are evidence of weakness or nonsense. The world being an infernal bubble, let us laugh or sneer; the end will take care of itself. If this is unjust towards Doré, he has made it the frequent language of his art.

How incapable he shows himself of estimating rightly the

character of Don Quixote, except in its ridiculous aspect! Look at his design of him when wounded and melancholy! Is there anything of the honest, half-mad gentleman that he was in that overdrawn, battered face? There is some pathos in the anatomical refinement of lines expressive of gentle birth combined with the deplorable condition of the patient sufferer, and we feel sure that he is no rightly served bully, but a true man, who has met with misfortune, whether born of his own folly or not, it cannot be told. But Doré twists the pathetic into the absurd. The "Don Quixote," however, contains much that is very good in individual character, though that is not the artist's strongest point. His treatment of groups, and generalization of movement and effects, are more masterly.

As a landscapist, Doré shows qualities of interpretation that place him above all others of the school. Thus far we only know it by designs, especially those in Atala. But these manifest his consciousness of the sublime in a remarkable degree. They are ideal compositions interpenetrated with the gloom and mystery of a nature torn by her own wrath, and terrified by her own mystic solitude; in general dissociated from man, or, when associated with him, akin to his fellest passions, untamed and savage as he was before civilization began. They realize our conception of primal creation. There is no caricature in them, but a vast creative or disturbing sense, which makes and destroys with equal facility. Doré grasps the formative idea, and shapes his creations to express the animating feeling. It is organic spirit even more than nature that we see in his designs. He thus insists upon the highest triumphs of art. One who does this may not always be or intend to be perfect in drawing, or exact in perspective. If, like Doré, he works immensely, he will often be careless and superficial. We find him sometimes blundering in details, weak in consequence of departing from his immediate fields of strength, but almost always making apparent the intended idea and artistic effect. Dealing largely with the supernatural and with caricature, he must exaggerate known forms or invent new, to create the impressions he has in view. He cannot therefore be bound down to the common rules of realistic art. His success depends upon his freedom of them at will. The grotesque, terrible, and striking in the supernatural or the sublime have a law unto themselves. An artist who can do what Doré does in this line, is capable of the minor reaches of art. He attains his aim by means at the command only of

genius. His deficiencies are those of genius also, and go to prove his intrinsic greatness.

Doré's art is great. Is it good? It need not be Christian in a nice sense to be this, but it must be natural, truthful, and humane. It should have also the instinct of the beautiful. Doré's art has almost none of these qualities. Much of it is heartless, sensual, and perverse. It refuses to elevate, or instruct, or even amuse, except the mind, like the art, be prone to obscene, cruel, or mocking levity; preferring to excite emotions which have in them little that is pleasurable or improving. The general tendency is to deepen and strengthen those proclivities of the French school which most require pruning and reforming. If the Devil has ever created such an office as Designer-in-chief to Hell, it is now filled by Doré.

To sum up, the genuine French school of painting has been shown to be of recent origin. During the past century, French motives prevailed; but the art itself was so essentially decorative and trivial, that it deserves mention only in connection with history. That of the Revolution was founded chiefly on Plutarchian ideas, and the examples of Italian masterpieces brought to Paris by Napoleon I. It developed into the "grand style," which proved only a transitory fashion, from want of solid foundation in the national character. As the Gallic tendencies in art came to the surface in consequence of freer latitude of thought and action, the school became divided into two branches. One, the elder, was eclectic and theoretical, basing itself more particularly on academic rules. Ingrés, Couture, Scheffer, Delaroche, and Hippolyte Flandrin, as we have seen, were its chief ornaments. Their art was cosmopolitan in principle. It has nothing distinctively national in it, except style. The motives are mainly drawn from foreign sources. Allegory, history, poetry, and religion are each treated in a learned and lofty way. Like the Latin tongue, it is universally understood by the educated; but, having little in common with the people at large, it is scarcely noticed by them.

The younger branch, which now overtops the elder, has a broader foundation. It equally admits the value of learning, has even a more genuine æsthetic sense, and further recognizes the tastes and desires of the public, gives expression to French ideas and life, and makes itself intelligible to all classes. Its chief value lies not so much in what it has already accomplished as in its promise to lead the people into more correct

notions of the relations of nature to art, and of becoming their mouth-piece of civilization. Perhaps the school has not reached its culminating point. There are symptoms of progress. Genius is rare, and talent common. Something is still wanted to inspire the art-mind to nobler work. It has discovered the road to nature, but takes to its vices more than its virtues. Truth of design alone is not sufficient. There is an inferior as well as superior choice in motives. It depends upon the exercise of the latter to make art benefit a people. The purest French artists are sad, serious men; isolated, but scantily recognized; not strong enough to change the popular taste, and without any wide-spread sympathy to uphold them. Delaroche, Ary Scheffer, and Flandrin were of this type. I think Corot and Jules Breton must be also; for the faith of both, as seen in their art, has a tinge of melancholy, as if they, too, sorrowed at the public indifference to its higher meaning.

The strong men are the sensualist-realists, or meretricious idealists, — Gérome, Doré, Baudry, Cabanal — masters who deal in the wanton, pretty, and external common; finishers without thought, of the Meissonnier stamp; the decorators, exhibitors of force and spectacular art to glorify the nation. French criticism seldom concerns itself with moral aspects. It is technical, incisive, *spirituel*, descriptive, and keen in the external. An inquiry into the tendency of art on any higher basis of investigation, evidently would be voted dull and uncalled for. A school like this is neither very wise nor very good. Pure ideas and profound thoughts, to the intent to improve and instruct as well as to gratify the love of the beautiful, which in itself, rightly viewed, is a moral quality, find but a limited appreciation. Even the poetry of art is set aside by the strong appetite for its material aspect. It must continue so until there is a moral and intellectual upheaval of society into a loftier stratum of existence. The imperial government bestows a vast patronage. At no period has art been paid as at present, unless it was in the times of Phidias and the Cæsars. The magnitude of the works ordered for public edifices is astonishing. Frescoes are commanded by acres in extent. One wall in a court of the Hotel des Invalides painted by M. Mapin, one hundred and eighty feet long, comprises twelve hundred life-size figures, drawn from the history of France. This is one of four on a similar scale. Horace Vernet's "Smala" occupies a canvas sixty-six feet long by sixteen high. The field and pay of artists in France are alike large.

In Italy, the best mural work was done without mercenary stimulus. Zeal either for religion, the country, or ambition to excel prompted the Italian master to the accomplishment of those great paintings, which have ever since been a source of instruction and a stimulus to effort for all other peoples. Yet his pay in the fifteenth century, and his social position, were about on the level of an artisan's. It would seem, therefore, that the elevation of French painting depends not on money, fashion, or patronage of government. More serious inspiration is needed to arouse it to put forth energies and aspirations commensurate with the high office it ought to take. But until that is generated, we must take it for what it is, a brilliant and versatile school, devoted to little else beside decoration, entertainment, genre-illustration, and in its present spirit, neither a wise nor prudent example for others.

## CHAPTER XI.

### FRENCH SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE.

FRENCH sculpture demands but brief notice. Beside painting it makes but an indifferent figure, though much the same in spirit. The earlier Renaissant sepulchral monuments retain something of mediæval decorum of composition and sincerity of purpose, while the sixteenth century sculpture, more Italian than French, is chiefly illustrated by Cellini's huge "Nymph," unattractive in pose and inelegant in outline. As the sculpture became more national, it degenerated from this standard. Goujon's "Diana," is largely done, but looks like a fine lady of the time playing the chaste goddess. In nothing is there evidence of true beauty: instead, an amorous desire of the pretty-sensual.

*Pseudo-classical work.*

From this time there is a succession of weak, pseudo-classical work of the dainty-pretty order, clinging to antique motives or travestying Christian notions and personages into pagan garbs, as affected in sentiment as meretricious in execution. Incapacity of original idea and treatment is apparent in all the sculptors, so that there is not much to choose between Pilon, Pradier, Chaudet, and the rest of the classicalists, although there is some distinction among them in manual dexterity and facility of composing. Their work has the appearance of *acting*, not of *being*, like its Grecian prototype. Portrait-statuary alone retains some real life, but this soon grows absurd; draperies broken, confused, and mean, without connection with the figure, which they overpower, besides wanting in grace and harmony of lines. In preceding centuries the lords of the soil, when put to sepulchral sleep, were made decorous in marble or bronze. They kneel, repent, pray, recognize an authority diviner than theirs, and are costumed like men. But the Louises of France, beginning with the thirteenth, changed all this. Royalty posed itself as divinity, though to ordinary eyesight it looked like a Jupiter Scapin.

It covered itself and its creatures with decorations, embroideries, and curious devices, until the ruler was lost in the mob of artificial distinctions he had himself invented to represent his divine right and origin. Sculpture, as one sees in the Louvre, meant masses of laces, frills, periwigs, buckles, and robes, so weighty that ancient armor seems light and cheerful in sight of them; the whole constituting a hideous or ridiculous stone monster, painful to view as art, and dispiriting as an exhibition of human imbecility.

Between A. D. 1620 and 1720, the period of Pierre Puget, there is some clever work partly influenced by the style of Michael Angelo and in part by the antique, scholarly in treatment, after the Poussin manner in painting. It is strictly aristocratic sculpture, — made for a privileged caste, and affected by queens and titled beauties to display such seductiveness of limbs and bosoms as the sculptor could model for them, and by kings and nobles to ape the warrior; ordering the heroisms and majesty to be carved in stone which failed of growth in their hearts; ideal humbugs of virtue and beauty. Now came the fashion of reducing the gods and goddesses of Greece to statuettes as ornaments for boudoirs. What courtier-sculptor, after essaying to make a Bourbon into a Jupiter, would venture to make Zeus himself other than a diminutive individual in comparison? Houdon, later, did more justice to the nude classical. His portrait-busts also have expression; are Greuze-like in character. In his work, as in David's, one sees a genuine love of the antique, though the ecstatic national vanity of the period perverted its application.

There is now in France abundance of decorative and monumental sculpture of a fair quality and taste, and some excellent realistic work, especially of animals. Were we, however, to estimate the national intellect by the intellectual character of the average busts and portrait-statues shown in the annual expositions at Paris, the rest of the world might fancy that the French mind was relapsing into inanity, or had succumbed to a passion for personal display and the vanity of decoration. Such excellence as may be detected, is mechanical and superficial. The rule is, no ideas, no serious work, no profound motives, no regard for high art, nothing to indicate a desire to place sculpture in its rightful position as the incarnation of Mind.

*Modern Paris.*

In general, however, the sculpture, being decorative in character and motive, appears to better advantage

seen in mass with architecture than by itself. In some respects the Paris of the third Napoleon is considered to be the model city of civilization, especially for its architectural appearance. Examine it an instant. Old Paris is erased. A few grand monuments remain, but restored much as a time-consumed belle revives her color by enamelling, and replaces missing or dilapidated parts of her frame with such artifices as the repairers of the human body can invent. The ancient landmarks which surrounded them have been swept away like so much street garbage. Never has there been so complete a change in so short a time in the aspect of a city, unless the transforming of Rome from brick into marble by Augustus equalled it. If the health and comfort of the population are bettered, and civic convenience augmented, no æsthetic considerations or historical associations should stand in their way; for thorough ventilation, drainage, pure water, and cleanliness should be had at whatever cost to the picturesque or sentimental. A sanitary argument enforces itself, because physical well-being is the basis of prosperity and culture in a State. So far, therefore, as Paris has gained in this respect, the radical policy of Napoleon III. in uprooting its old features is commendable. But the new æsthetic aspect is fairly open to criticism independent of its twin-question. There may be unnecessary destruction, absurd restoration, insensibility to beauty or crude taste. Improvements can be made to harmonize in their æsthetic and sanitary relations, instead of clashing. as is common. Florence gives the precedence to the beautiful in her municipal policy, completing the most charming boulevards and drives in Europe in her environs, while postponing the introduction of wholesome water, and widening the narrow mediæval thoroughfares, and taking measures to improve the foul stone dens, in which the larger number of her inhabitants do not live out nature's allotted number of years. Boston goes to the opposite extreme, regarding first the essentials of physical welfare, and leaving the æsthetic wants of the population to care for themselves. Napoleon III. evidently kept both in view, aiming to make his capital the most elegant as well as the most convenient of the world. In a certain sense his scheme is a success both ways. New Paris is a well-scrubbed, waxed, polished, gorgeous town, imposing in its topographical arrangement, geometrically accurate, and largely conceived, pleasurably adorned after a scenic method, and as an entirety admirably calculated to make the same agreeable im-

pression on a vast scale on a spectator at first view that one of its tastefully ordered shop windows or an admirable toilette of a Parisian lady does in a small way; either being for the moment so satisfactory in general effect as to indispose the senses to a critical inspection of the object itself in detail. So far, therefore, art in all these cases has a gracious mien. But as it is addressed solely to the external senses, it soon cloys. The hungry mind gets indignant at the imposed famine. It speedily discovers there is no æsthetic conscience or culture in the monotonous street architecture and its wearisome parallel and horizontal lines, stretching mile upon mile in uniform glitter, overspread with senseless, meretricious carvings of the bastard Renaissant order, having no relation either to the age or the background itself, — each avenue, house, and shop the counterpart of its neighbor, so that, having seen a segment of Paris, one has seen the whole; and worse, it perceives there is no more individuality of character in the new buildings than in baker's bread, which is divided into categories according to the paste, pattern, and its white-of-egg varnish. Just so may the edifices be classified from the number of gilt balconies, idiotic carvings, trumpery ornaments, areas of plate glass, or unsightly ranges of arcades clumsily drawn out into interminable lengths like the peoples' loaves, brilliant as gaud for the eye, but vanity of vanities as food for the imagination. Everything seems run in the same mould; a one-mind system arbitrarily overruling individual choice and expression; each object and person reflecting, as the shadow does the substance, a barren, unæsthetic will, incapable of rising above a statistical conception of life; holding primarily to strategic and dynastic aims, and secondly to diverting the national energies entirely to mercenary considerations and sensual pleasures. We have unity of material outlook, but no intellectual variety of aspect. Unlike other old cities, little is left to stir the emotions or arrest the fancy. Everything is spectacular; a change of fashions in the shop windows being the chief excitement to the passers. Despotism has made of Paris a brilliant bazaar, café, and theatre; in truth, a well-baited trap for money and morals. Its standard of humanity is low, ambitions narrow, knowledge contracted to selfish aims, and chase of fleeting pleasure intense. The eye is fed to the stint of the soul; and it is not all wholesome eyesight; for too much is sheer artifice, which weakens the faculty of perceiving the true, creating instead a liking for whatever is scenic, transitory, and

unlike nature, or a passion for coarse grotesque, the exaggerated sensual, bizarre, and uncommon. It is surface gayety on a foundation of mental despair or heaviness of heart, arising from perverted or restrained aspirations; for imperialism is the enemy to death of human liberty of progress in its own way and for its highest interests. Imperialism necessarily consumes itself; for its principle is to take so much care of the people, that it ends either in emasculating them of manly vigor, or makes them despise and hate the administering head; both results destructive to genuine national life. The only wages a despotism like this can bestow are sensualities which react on the giver, and deprive him of all hold on the moral sense of the nation. Hence they corrupt speedily and perish disastrously. Papacy is no less a despotism, more searching and complete, but it endures because it feeds the imagination. If it deprives its subjects of human rights on earth, it offers a consoling future in its heaven, and threatens more cogently by means of its terrific hell. Some may view these remarks as foreign to my topic. But they are generated by the spirit which pervades new Paris — to me a sad one, typified in its general aspect; and this aspect is due to the one-man system of governing. In any case the result depends on the probity, intelligence, and sensibility of the executive mind, be it centred in one person or spread among many. History conclusively demonstrates that although the former method sometimes effects notable, radical changes, its end is never salutary. All noble and fine art, aye, all thorough work of any character, from the Athens of Phidias down to our time, has had its root in the will and taste of the people collectively. Whenever art has been made a monopoly of a ruler or dependent for expression in his caprices and interests, it has either decayed altogether, or become foolish and contemptible. Nero, Hadrian, the Medici, the Philips of Spain, Louis XIV. and XV. of France, and finally Napoleon III., are familiar names in this connection, just as the commonwealths of ancient Greece, Etruria, the republics of Florence, Venice, the free cities of Germany, and the civil liberties of Holland and England are associated with the most flourishing periods of their art. There is no avoiding the conclusion that freedom of mind and hand in the multitude is required for a genuine, national art; and that any state dictation or even excessive patronage is mischievous, if not fatal, to its being. Even if an arbitrary ruler is certain to act wisely, the principle is none the less wrong,

because it takes away from those whom it most concerns the practice and experience necessary to complete their artistic education, and leaves a whole people dependent on the knowledge and virtue of one fallible mortal. Those of my countrymen, therefore, who admire Paris, especially him who said that "All good Americans go to Paris when they die," had better pay more regard to its moral constitution before deciding that it is a fit heaven for the people of the New World.[1]

The ambition of Napoleon III. to make Paris the finest city of earth is far better than that of Louis XIV., whose aim was to construct for himself the finest palace. Each of these men has impressed himself on the architecture of France with uniform egoism, and similar unhappy results as regards the public taste. But all the weakness or evil of a national art inspired by a despotism does not necessarily originate in the ruler. Neither of these sovereigns could have achieved what they have, of good or bad art, had not the national mind been more or less in sympathy with their views. It admires organization, precision, system, symmetry, proportion, display, splendor, and a grand style of work. Much is forgiven the magnificent, munificent despot, but he must likewise be nice in small things. Frenchmen shine in making even the common article attractive to the eye, or exaggerating its consequence by sounding epithets and extravagant claims. Vulgar necessity is embowered in roses. Their æsthetic taste is not profound, imaginative, or notably picturesque in expression, but specious, scenic, brilliant; chiefly sensuous-pleasurable in aim, not according to the old Grecian theory of joyous sensations, but superficial, sentimental, impatient. They display a sharp insight into the technics of art; an incisive, analytical delight in its execution and style rather than a happiness in its highest intellectual and spiritual qualities. The greatest pleasure comes from the *spirituel* element; the more satisfying

[1] I commend to his notice the following statistics of his New Jerusalem. The proportion of illegitimate children born in Paris is now one half the whole number, or one in two; only Vienna is ahead, its ratio being five hundred and nine out of every one thousand. The annual births are about fifty-five thousand, of which nearly thirty thousand die the first year, a large number of which are effectually put out of the way by the system of "*l'allaitement mercenaire*," which called forth the exclamation of one of the mayors of the communes to which the babies are largely sent, "*Notre cimetière est pavé de ces petits Parisiens.*" The annual suicides of imperial Paris vary from eight hundred to nine hundred, steadily increasing, while democratic New York, with a nearly equal population, counts but forty to fifty.

if sensual or malicious. Art flavored with sacrilegious wit or burlesques has a very fine relish. What other people would put the sign, "La Grace de Dieu," over a groggery, as may be seen in Lagny, or dedicate shops where female gear is sold "au Diable!" That art, however, which most gratifies Gallic vanity regardless of its truth, is the most relished of all. "If France be satisfied, the rest of the world may repose in peace," is heard with serene satisfaction from the mouth of their sovereign, as an Olympian fact; but no other king could utter such a sentiment without shocking the common sense of his subjects. Nothing so contents the masses as an effective or elegant appearance. Whatever be the state of soundness within, the outside must be taking. Government fosters popular illusions as a source of power to itself. It has more reliance on a gilt lie than a naked fact. This principle poisons society, and reacts on the government, which must continue either to amuse and feed the public at a vast expense, or divert its bitterness of disappointment on its neighbors, as the cheapest artifice to save its neck from the rope of its own twisting. The present art of governing France is simply one form of æsthetic immorality.

By the few initiated, the history and science of art in general is well understood; its philosophy, too, in a speculative, epigrammatic manner, though with but little æsthetic feeling of a serious character, or conscientious regard for the independent principle of art itself, which is forced to fit sectarian sentiment by writers of the Rio order, or to afford scope for brilliant theorizing, or beautiful materialistic compositions by unbelieving authors, who take it up more as affording opportunity to display their own artistic cleverness in words than to investigate its character after the example of the more critical Germans. It may be presumptuous to say so; but it does seem to me that the French in art, as in other departments of civilization, arrogate a superiority not warranted by facts. If they possessed this intellectual superiority, no ruler could so easily master and bridle them as Louis Napoleon has done; one, too, who, excepting some practical sagacity in commercial matters, has evinced no political wisdom, but rather a curious faculty of obfuscating truth and juggling with events which he was powerless to control, and who comes off the loser in encounters with clever, bold statesmen like Cavour, Seward, or Bismark. His acts and talk are much after the fashion of most of French art; concocted to appear better than they really are, or to cover up something that

it is not politic to disclose. Their sound and promise are alike specious. A Parisian butcher gives his legs of mutton an æsthetic look by dressing them in chemises of white paper, perforated to resemble lace. With this toilet, aided by fragrant flowers, he so pleasurably conceals the scent and garb of the shambles that the most timid lamb might enjoy the spectacle. Shop-girls make pretty and cheap objects appear twice as charming and useful as they really are, by a sleight-of-hand arrangement, much like the emperor's talk about liberty, which, as regards any practical purpose, is as much a mockery as is the beautifully exhibited trumpery of trade. The success of the emperor and the deficiency of art are due to the same cause; not to lack of intellect and knowledge, but of morality in the country at large. Louis Napoleon won his precarious position by appealing to its vanity, fears, and selfishness; gratifying each in turn by a show-art, show-wars, saving society from the phantom of socialism, and developing business so as to change the masses into quite as eager hunters of the sovereign dollar as the Anglo-Saxons themselves were said to be by his uncle. For these benefits, the nation overlooked perjury; the heedless slaughter of men, women, and children, on the 2d of December, 1851, by drunken troops; the subsequent shooting by mistake of numbers of citizens loyal to the conspirators; the exile of nearly all eminent men; an enormous increase of debt; the extinction of political liberty, whether of press, speech, or legislature; a stock-jobbing Mexican expedition, undertaken to secure the supremacy of the Latin race in the New World, which resulted in proving their inability to hold their own in the Old World; in short, a series of crimes and blunders that must have consigned to the scaffold an adventurer who had not the dexterity to poise himself on the tip of a bayonet. A like career is possible only where the standard of right and wrong in morals, beauty, and trade is low, and all the more possible if the training of a people is rather for external appearance than internal soundness; seeming replacing being; prizes offered for virtue, and, as in the recent case of Josephine Gabriel of Marseilles, won by hypocrisy. Josephine was crowned as the most deserving girl of the city. Soon after, she married, persuaded her husband to make a will in her favor, and then, after piously making an offering to the Virgin to secure her aid, poisoned her spouse in order to use his money to bribe a man, of whom she had become enamored, to return her passion.

One criminal does not taint a nation; but the active principle that brought Josephine Gabriel to the guillotine, placed Louis Bonaparte on the throne, after he had been rewarded for supposed virtue by the supreme gift of a deluded race. In imitation of the French practice, an American Crœsus and amateur of horses has offered prize medals for fine gentlemen; but this fallacious way of breeding virtue will never take root where shams are readily exposed. It is a plausible theory that premiums develop goodness, that money makes art, fine words an honest public servant, or accumulation of riches constitutes greatness. The French people having undertaken the experiment on a vast scale, let us wait for the consummation before deciding to follow in their footsteps.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ART IN AMERICA.

IF this chapter were to be limited to what actually exists in America of indigenous art, it would be almost as brief as that on snakes in a certain History of Ireland. But the topic is too serious to be treated only on the negative side. Let us take a stock-account of what we have, in view of what we need. An embryo painter like West is no longer obliged to rob the tail of his mother's cat to make a brush, nor do we as frequently hear grandfathers, like Harding's, say, "I want you to give up this course of living [portrait-painting]. It is no better than swindling to charge forty dollars for one of these effigies. Settle down on a farm, and become a respectable man." No! The anti-respectable notion of art, the joint offspring of the utilitarian habits of a country new to civilization and the religious tenets of Puritan settlers, has given place in the common mind to a notion almost as one-sided and ignorant in the opposite direction. It inclines to take a sentimental view of the functions of an artist and his works, as of an exceptional being not amenable to the usual rules of criticism, and, covering them with poetical haze, allows the imagination to accept the promise for the fulfilment. This, too, when, as regards art-education, we are only a step in advance of those rudimentary savages who fail to discriminate in a painting between a man, horse, house, tree, or ship. We can do this, and it is about as far as our training as a people in this direction has gone.

*Condition and needs.*

There was an intermediate state of unintelligent curiosity about art as something strange or wonderful, like a newly discovered plant or a gorilla from Africa. This was the time when people curious to know what the "Chanting Cherubs" of Greenough or the "Greek Slave" of Powers could be, were scarcely to be persuaded to visit them lest their modesty be shocked at their nudity, or were led to go because they were naked, and peep at them between their fingers. We are less

easily shamed now. The French theatre having trained American maidens to look upon actual immodesty with a cool gaze, real art no longer runs a risk of being unnoticed for "holding up a mirror to nature."

What we now want is to train the public to comprehend the true nature and functions of art. In a brief, imperfect way I have sought to present some correct notions of them. Before touching American art itself, there is need of clearing up some of the fog that either magnifies or obscures it.

The little absolutely noble art of the world is confined to a few names, and deserves all and even more of the esteem which Americans give to the fictitious and common. Their sentiment is right, but wrongly placed. The average artist of Europe is not a genius; seldom a poet or man of ideas. The average American artist is of a lower standard of professional education, and seldom possessing an æsthetic temperament. There is no more loss to mankind in the periodical decay of much of the work that passes current as art at any time, than in the dying out of bad or dubious fashions, with the chance of replacement by better. In literature it is the same. Some manuscripts leaving a gap in our mental history, no doubt, were lost in the burning of the Alexandrine library; but the contents of the great mass must have been as unimportant and ephemeral as are the great herd of books nowadays. Whatever each generation can produce for itself, conditions being equal, is better for its own life than what is left out of the uses of the preceding; for otherwise it looks backwards overmuch instead of forward.

Genius being exceptional revelation, its advent can never be predicted. Whatever it has given the world in art or science should be jealously preserved as a permanent legacy to all mankind. But there is no special reason for preserving the productions of ordinary talent or manual dexterity, except as illustrations of history, and to fill up collections of curiosities. The sooner bad or immoral art perishes, the better. The common fulfils its purpose in pleasing its contemporaries. As with books, one class of art gives way to another, in which the same thought is renewed in a fresh shape, so that, though the dead form decays, the spirit lives and passes on, let us hope, into a superior. That which I desire now to emphasize is, that the average art of America is of no more worth that the average literature of its journals. Both are cheap and rapid productions to meet the immediate wants of a people, whose standard of culture is steadily advancing.

Moveover, the average artist is as easily produced as the average writer, the one occupation requiring no more talent or study than the other. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find successful artists, as regards making money, who have begun life as traders, mechanics, or writers. There is so little real artistic fibre as yet, that most of those engaged in the one career would have met with equal success in the other had circumstances drawn them to it. Of art, as genius, we have none; as the expression of an æsthetic constitution and ambition, very little; of conscientious study and profound knowledge, even less; but as the fruit of the demand-and-supply principle of business, much. Commissions are called "orders," as in trade, and art is mainly ordered as one orders a style of calico of a cotton factory. The ingenious means which are taken by some prominent painters and sculptors to advertise themselves and their productions, are far more in unison with commercial than artistic habits, tend to substitute fictitious notoriety for true fame, and to make immediate success depend more on the tact of the artist in keeping his name prominently before the public than on skill and devotion to art itself. An increasing number of persons engage in art for no sincere purpose except to speedily become rich; their credit, like that of merchants, being based on the amount of business they do.

*Average artist and average patron.*

In England the system is not much better, but the aristocratic and cultivated element of society raises its standard somewhat, while America, as yet, has only a raw sentiment or crude taste to guide her art; the average artist himself being as uninformed and uncultured, except as regards his technical processes, as the average patron. This state of things can be remedied by a systematic training, and the formation of museums and galleries devoted to the philosophy of art as exhibited in its best attainable specimens of all epochs, arranged so as to best show their æsthetic qualities and historical distinctions. Climate and race with us are as favorable to the development of the æsthetic instinct and of taste, as with any other people. Indeed, the fusion of bloods in our civilization, joined to the absolute freedom of the popular will to follow out its own convictions, is preparing a more favorable ground in America than exists elsewhere.

During the first century of English life in America, or until the birth of West, there was no sign of enterprise in this direction. Pictures, if any, were heir-looms or gifts from the

old country. There was a slight movement in the second century of colonization, but even then an artist of any ability was obliged to emigrate to Europe to live, as well as to educate himself. West, Copley, Vanderlyn, and Leslie would have starved at home; abroad they secured either wealth or distinction. Having given their characteristics in the "Art Idea," it is unnecessary to say more of them now, or of that well-trained class of portrait and historical painters, like Stuart, Peale, Trumbull, and Sully, who illustrated the annals of the Revolution. Allston had more ambition, feeling, and knowledge of true art than manual ability; and both he, Cole, and Horatio Greenough, who were like him in these respects, can be cited, not as masters, but as proofs of innate capacity in the native American for high art, and as having inaugurated their school with lofty intellectual motives. Being in advance of their time, it is no cause of surprise that they and all since who prefer idealism to realism, like William Page, Inness, William Hunt, La Farge, Furness, and Babcock, should receive a scant recognition in comparison with those who appeal only to the outward eye. Somewhat of their comparative failure is owing to their manual shortcomings and insufficiency of continuing well-directed effort; there being no supreme standard of excellence at home to animate them always to their best, or of critical knowledge to appreciate their higher qualities. They have produced characteristic though not great work, and are an important element, not so much from what has been done as for being a living protest against the obtrusive realism and superficiality of thought of more popular painters, and for keeping the imagination and refinement of manner from dying out altogether. They also, more than others, show that a fine sense and sentiment of color are facts of the American temperament. While artists of their aim and inspiration exist in any school, it holds germs of excellence.

*The Idealists.*

There is another class that disputes with them the palm of art on the score of absolute fidelity of design, with painstaking sincerity, rendering the little and great with equal love and patience, irrespective of ideas and imagination; seeking chiefly to give the precise forms and relations of things in their external look, without other imprint of choice or sentiment in composition than nature herself at the moment discloses. This phase is admirably represented in what it undertakes by Charles Moore and Farrar. They are exact literalists, having a con-

scientious regard for their specific motive, and doing their work with a thoroughness of touch and study which affords an example to others. Their art thus far relies too much on its local truth of design and hue, and topographical exactitude of representation, and too little on the sentiment of nature or on the language of color, the strong point of the idealists. It is based on a misconception of high art, which has a deeper purpose in view than mere truthful representation of external nature, though it demands that. If its highest purpose was only to exhibit form, distance, proportion, local color, and the physical relations of things in detail and mass, then any instrument which could measure sufficiently, and take in enough points, could do the artistic work, or the most of it. But that which gives the mental or spiritual characterization, whether of man or nature, evades any grasp of this sort. The artist must find that within, not without himself. Can we compose beauty by mathematical receipt, or depict a sigh or smile as they occur by any number of measurements of the length, depth, and breadth of the ever moving human features? Yet there are artists who claim that this is the true and final rule of art; a delusion which even their own inept productions do not dispel. I do not refer to the conscientious painters just mentioned, who begin in the right way, but do not go deep enough into the truths of nature, but of that delusion, chiefly confined to sculpture, which comes of the proclivity of the American mind to mechanics. In thus speaking of the mechanical and commercial spirit of American artists, it is not that I do not highly value trade and mechanics, but because their virtues, if applied dominantly to art, become its vices. Mankind can live without art, but not without them. Our history, particularly the Rebellion, shows how much we can sacrifice for political and moral ideas, and that a nation may be great and good without being æsthetic, though art alone can tangibly keep alive to distant generations the nobility of thought and deed of those preceding. Therefore it is the more essential to the sound development of civilization that each thing be kept in its right place. The spirit that sustains trade, debases art; that which is constructive excellence in mechanical labor proper, is enfeebling in æsthetics. Machine-work is the one great idealism of our prosaic civilization. Even Story, whose artistic cultivation ought to preserve him from such an error, advocates, in his treatise on proportions in sculpture, the adoption of a formula by which he claims that he can repeat the feat of Telekles and

Theodorus, artists who wrought so perfectly by rule, that the half of a Pythian Apollo was made by one at Samos, and the other half at Ephesus by his companion, the halves fitting, when brought together, as precisely as if the statue had been the work of one hand. If this mechanical success of parts were the true aim of art, we should establish separate manufactories of statues in pieces, as of watches, to be put together as needed, with extra members warranted to fit in case of loss of any of the first set.

Painting, fortunately, cannot be reduced, like sculpture, to such a mechanical system. It may be wanting in mind, superficial in treatment, and empty of feeling, yet the painter must in some degree represent himself in his work; whereas, by the above principle, machines could be constructed to turn out sculpture, as they do any other kind of strictly conventional ornamentation. In fact, we have a system of machine-statuary by patent. Of course, no intelligent artist advocates this. Story evidently means that he would make a model so perfect by his rule of proportions as to present to the workmen a guide so anatomically faultless that it would be a matter of indifference if the whole were put into marble in one block, or distributed in limbs to different studios. Whether each laborer saw the entire model or not, his portion would be certain to be accurately done in relation to the mass.

This fallacy obtains extensively with our sculptors, and deludes them into mistaking means for ends. Indeed, several advocate the theory of measurements as the only necessary guide in sculpture. Agreeing too well with the national bent of mind, it is widely accepted without examination into its merits. For it is also particularly acceptable in its promise of saving mental and manual labor, in view of finally cheapening the article. Here again comes in a notion all right as respects mechanics, and all wrong as regards art. Cheap art is always poor art, or no art. It is like a vessel carrying contraband under favor of a false flag. An opinion exists that genius works with a rapid hand; consequently quick work is a sign of genius, no matter how it is produced. An artist, therefore, is tempted to employ any means of economizing labor and expense to enable him to respond to the popular notion, irrespective of the quality of his art; also to encourage a delusion which disguises his manual deficiencies and disinclination to severe study. Genius may conceive with the rapidity of light, but elaboration is the result of

long and diligent practice. Thought and manual labor differ widely in their economy of time. An idea which is to change the aspect of the world, may be born in one second; but the means by which the revolution is effected, may be centuries in maturing. Just so is it with fine art. A sketch suggestive of a master's hand can be thrown off in an hour, but its complete execution is most often the patient labor of months or years. Work that falls short of this, is almost always intended for specific effect in certain positions for definite purposes, and is without disguise more or less slight in execution, or it is absolute scenic artifice, actually intended to present as imposing a look with as little expenditure of means as possible, in order to cheat the public.

Both sculpture and painting indulge in this latter practice, aided and abetted by the illogical and ignorant ideas of the public at large, principally grounded in the confounding of mechanical with artistic qualities, though with good ends in view. A little reflection will show that sculpture reduced to a mechanical system can make no advance, and that the first work of a sculptor done by it, is as likely to be as good as his last, while it ignores that vital characterization which is the play of mind, and which mind alone transmits to the clay through the fingers, and not by the points of any instrument.

Infinite pointings cannot place the modelling of the modern sculptor on a par with that of Phidias or Michael Angelo, nor will any theory of the "canons of measurement" reveal the secret principles by which they put unconscious life into stone. These come and go with the master's life-blood. Neither can any painter of to-day, by charlatanism of brush or time-saving instruments, rival the old men who put first their minds and then their fingers with unsparing energy and fidelity into their work.

*The new American school of painters.*

America at last has a class of painters of realistic tendency, eclectic and scientific in practice, as sincere and chaste in motive as the English school, though not its equal yet in execution, nor on the level of the best style of the French, to which it seemingly aspires. This class is respectably represented by Eastman Johnson, Elihu Vedder, Winslow Homer, and others of their stamp. These already contest with the landscapists the popular favor. If they have not as yet succeeded in notably raising the standard of idea in art, considerable has been accomplished in elevating its execution. But

their principal service is the reproof they offer to the slop-work of the melodramatists, of whom Leutze was chief. Of all his frantic compositions, the fresco of "Westward Ho!" in the glass method, painted in the Capitol at Washington, is the maddest. A more vicious example in composition and coloring, with some cleverness of details, could not be presented to young painters. Confusion reigns paramount, as if an earthquake had made chaos of his reckless design, hot, glaring coloring, and but ill comprehended theme.

We owe, also, to the new men an infusion of fresh life into the old academic routine of conventional dulness and weakness which was fast putting all America, before they came upon the scene, as regards idealistic painting, much into the condition of the good people of Sleepy Hollow, reducing our æsthetic condition to a level of the understanding required to appreciate the Peter Parley style of literature. Thanks to them, a picture now must be something besides so many square feet of meaningless coloring and infant-school drawing.

In *genre*, which is coming into fashion, nothing more noteworthy has been done than to attempt it sincerely, with an occasional tendency to humor. The Great Exposition of 1867 at Paris, taught us a salutary lesson by placing the average American sculpture and painting in direct comparison with the European, thereby proving our actual mediocrity. Whistler's freaks of coloring were original, and his Tiepolo-like touch effective; but his pictures were rather suggestions of power than complete art. Some of Hunt's portraits displayed a refinement of characterization and delicacy of handling not seen in the more labored, conventional European portraiture. We most failed in our lauded landscapists. Bierdstadt's "Rocky Mountains," superior to subsequent work, looked cold and untruthful. Its interest was confined to a tableau-like inventory of an extensive view, while its effect on the mind was similar to sounding phrases of little meaning. His more recent work is no less illusive and spectacular, thinner in color, and may be compared to mere rhetorical oratory. Church's "Niagara," with no more sentiment, a cold, hard atmosphere, and metallic flow of water, gave greater local truth, and was a literal transcript of the scene. Bradford, likewise, is clever in topographical narration in a pictorial form; sometimes rendering the action and forms of waves with considerable accuracy. But none of this class of landscapists comprehend the language of color, or show a nice executive sense

of its use and capacity, as does Inness in one way and Vedder in another, quickening it with imagination original in tone and feeling. Bierdstadt gives scenic combinations of certain outside facts of nature, generally on a large scale, disenfranchised of sentiment and imagination. The enterprise of the sensational landscapists, in seeking out Nature's marvels amid the icebergs of Labrador, the recesses of the Andes, or the deserts of Arabia, is laudable; but the return to the spectator who thinks, or has the spiritual faculty, is not worth the cost. Yet they do address significantly the majority of Americans, who associate them with the vulgar idea of "big things," as business. In reality, they are bold and effective speculations in art on principles of trade; emotionless and soulless; possessing not even the pseudo-romantic spirit of the Poussin method of treating the landscape; still less those delicious technical qualities and that subtle poetical feeling which renders Corot's style so attractive to persons of a sensitive, refined temperament. Nature's best is left out. Instead, we get a misuse of artistic power and industry, which, if more sincerely and interpenetratingly directed, might produce something one would care to remember.

*The "Apollo and Marsyas" of Raphael.*

In his youth Raphael painted a picture of surpassing excellence even for him, "Apollo listening to Marsyas" playing the flute in rivalry of the god. This picture is still in fine condition, and belongs to Mr. Morris Moore of Rome. The figures of the god and satyr are thoroughly classical in motive and style of execution, possessing that statuesque grace and perfection of modelling which belongs to the best Grecian period. Nothing more vital in form and characterization has been conceived by Christian art. It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the majesty of Apollo as he stands intently listening to the notes of the rash Marsyas, so absorbed in his music as to be unconscious of the presence of his divine listener. No one who has not seen this painting, can realize the entire merit of Raphael as a painter, how thoroughly he enters into the spirit of the antique, and his capacity of putting its poetical myths into a fresh and beautiful shape. His conceptions of Christian topics seem in comparison conventional and constrained, as if he felt himself in intellectual bondage to ideas not in exact harmony with his own consciousness of the beautiful, except, as with his madonnas and children, he represented the emotions common to all humanity.

But it is of his landscape I would now speak, as the most

striking and precious contrast to the pretentious illusions or prosaic barrenness of the popular American school. Raphael composed his landscape only as a locality for his figures, to which it is strictly subordinated. The whole picture is only twelve inches broad by fifteen high. Nevertheless out of a few simple details of hill, river, distant town, and appropriate middle and foreground, he has got more distance, breadth, transparency of shadow, more vivid light of subtlest gradation of tone, and a greater suggestion of the variety of nature out of a few perfectly rendered details, set in an exquisite unity of warm coloring, than can be seen in any of the mammoth landscapes which have come into vogue from Claude's time to our own. He painted the landscape as though he loved it, doing thoroughly whatever he chose out of it for an accessory to his main motive, and casting over the whole the spell of his own subtle insight and observation.

We have one young man, Hotchkiss of Rome, who appreciates the qualities of the mediæval landscapists, and unites them, in his own work, to the greater variety and more distinctive realism of the best style of modern landscape-painting, as the old men did, solidly, conscientiously, and truthfully.

*Mediocrity of American sculpture.*

If the standard of American painting be one of mediocrity, what is to be said of the style of its sculpture? Everywhere, except in Italy, where linger some traditions and many examples of better days, sculpture falls behind painting. American sculpture is more ambitious in some respects than its sister art, aspires to a higher range of motives, and is feeling its way towards what may be called, if not original treatment, one more in accord with modern ideas than that of European sculpture in general. There is springing up a large and munificent demand for it in the shape of public monuments; it is coming into fashion as an adjunct to architecture; and there is a bounteous call for costly busts, portrait-statues, cheap copies of classical marbles and dear-at-any-price originals of Eves, Judiths, White Slaves, and other crude fancies of second-hand sentiment, or bad effigies in stone of imperfect nudity in the flesh. Unlike the Grecian, the American ideal sculpture has no perfected standard of beauty, but vibrates from one inferior model to another, with such original touches as the fancy of the sculptor supplies for its betterment. So far as the stimulus of buying is concerned, the American sculptor is the most fortunate of modern artists. If ample patronage can

create a national school, we shall have one soon. But the demand having preceded knowledge and skill, we are obtaining our sculpture to the detriment of our taste. It forces an inept art on an unprepared public as its standard of good in this direction. Some benefit may come of its effigies by familiarizing the people with the idea of art in general, and in time begetting a desire for better work. But for the moment the tendency, as before shown, is to view it more in the prosaic light of the business instincts of the masses than in a strictly æsthetic sense. So strongly ingrained is the desire of the beautiful in the Italian mind that it applies the word for it to remote or quite opposite associations; for instance, "*La cosa è bell' e fatta*," "The thing is *beautifully* done" (whatever it may be, even a crime); "*Egli è bell' e morto*," "He is *beautifully* dead" (meaning quite dead). The vender of fruit beneath my window is now proclaiming his merchandise, not literally "Ripe oranges for sale," but by a poetical appeal to the senses as follows: "*Ch' odore, che sapore, che colore*," "What odor, what flavor, what color!" in musical accents, leaving the hearer's fancy to finish his sentence, and whet the appetite. Americans, being sensitive to the absurd, in speaking of solemn emotions, often say, "I felt (or, it was) ridiculous," or, as they use their still more favorite verbal idealization, "a big thing," meaning something grand, noble, or sublime. Our idioms will tell us without fail when we have risen above the "big" or "ridiculous" apprehension of ideas and facts to the beautiful perception of them. But our speech cannot change until the feeling that seizes on the big or absurd as a synonyme of excellence and supremacy is diverted to a higher intellectual phase. To attain an end laudable or otherwise, the common rule is to talk "big" and work fast, without a moment's concern if it all ends in the ridiculous. A young woman in a leisure moment designs or compiles a grandiose monument to the martyr Lincoln, which is to cost several hundred thousand dollars, one which would have occupied a Michael Angelo perhaps years to have brought to a satisfactory condition; and instantly a committee adopt it, issuing a circular to the nation, in which this hasty composition is called "the greatest achievement of modern art," the completion of which "will place our country in art, as she is in freedom, in arms, in commerce, in manufactures, in science, and in skill in all that makes a nation great, in the front ranks of the nations of the earth!"

Either artist and committee, meaning noble, achieve foolish

things, or else, happy is the land where is born the woman who can thus elevate the entire people by one slight effort of her will and skill! This unfortunate conception of art and artist is filling our land with gigantic inanities in stone, miscalled monuments, but which are mechanical monstrosities. There are a few exceptions, like the unfulfilled design of Billings for the "Pilgrims' Monument" at Plymouth, Mass., which is appropriate and imposing, though the best figures are evidently suggested by the Sibyls or Prophets of Michael Angelo. But the greater number of our monuments have no unity of parts or purpose; are crude or commonplace in conception; either made up hastily for the market, or unadvisedly stolen or altered from preceding work, and calculated to reflect no honor on the dead or living. Soon there will be seen, in high places and in low, huge effigies, in bronze and stone, of volunteers on guard, at corners of columns, obelisks, and shafts of every conceivable degree of disproportion, misapplication, and inappropriate ornamentation, dedicated to the heroes of our late contest. Alas for them, or rather for us! For they are gone where the beautiful reigns paramount. We must remain a while longer where ugliness will, if we persist in paying an enormous bounty for it. I remember, recently, on going into a studio where one of these extraordinary State monuments was in process of manufacturing, of being confronted by one of the accessory "boys in blue" some thirty feet tall, and bringing away with me only a confused sensation of "big" buttons.

A clever sculptor will do good work in spite of unfavorable costume. Look at the statue of St. Alessio in the garb of a pilgrim, on the façade of Santa Trinita, Florence. Here is life-like movement and character, although intended merely for out-door decoration. Cacini, knowing the human anatomy, instead of piling trousers on boots, coat on trousers, shirt-collar and hat over all, and calling the heap of old clothes a statue, leaving the spectator to construct the bones and flesh out of his own consciousness, makes his man wear his clothes naturally and easily. Having something human to fit to, of themselves they suggest a man, and not a scarecrow of a cornfield, as do the limp statues with which Boston adorns its streets, like the "Horace Mann," formless and void, holding out the sleeve that does duty for an arm as if for charity; "Webster," built up after an intense study of his last suit of clothing; while the granite "Hamilton" seems intended for one of the Athenian

*The statues of Boston.*

Hermæ in a Yankee guise, his head being the only human suggestion about it. The graceful "Everett" is bursting off his coat-buttons in a frantic attempt to box the sky, or to hail George Washington to stop for him. Anything in the shape or action of a spinal column to these statues, not to mention actual limbs with muscles and articulations, is considered superfluous, if the clothes be correctly creased and buttoned, and some of the most striking points of the face given, on which is lavished what talent the sculptor possesses. Sculpture of the "Everett" pattern is no better than rank fustian, altogether unworthy of the modeller of the effigy of Judge Story at Mount Auburn.

How are we to secure better? There are two means. One, by competition. The point with the public is to get good sculpture, at prices which remunerate the artist proportionately to the talent or genius displayed. Anything over is almsgiving, or else a premium awarded to ignorance and charlatanism; if less than the work merits, the public forces the true artist into competing with the false in misleading the people, that he may gain his daily bread. Some stand out manfully, and abide their day of rightful appreciation; but the many go over to the ranks of the empirics, and, as things go, win fortunes. I shall enlarge on this aspect of the question, further on. Now the point is how to compel the sculptor to do his best. As he puts his profession on a level of trade, the patron must meet him on the same ground. Give the work to him who will do it best at a given price. To this it may be objected, Who is to be the judge? Adopt the system, and the competition and the criticism that must ensue, will speedily instruct both the sculptor and his patron. The immediate effect doubtless would be to turn a large part of the commissions now given by hazard or friendship to Americans into Italian hands, which, for one third the money at present so recklessly wasted, would return an equal amount of respectable mediocrity in marble and bronze, beside saving the nation from being made absolutely ridiculous in so much of its statuary. If we do not exact the fulfilment of the bond, who is to blame the artist for getting as much money for as little art as possible?

Let us examine into the practical working of the present system, for it is an important question, as respects both the money it costs, and the standard of art it creates. A distinguished man passes on to the other life. His form and character are to be transmitted to the future, in some enduring material. The present generation demands that he shall look life-like, even to the

transitory fashion of his clothes. An artist is chosen by a committee of subscribers to the fund, almost invariably on personal considerations, without any special regard to his fitness for the work, of which few among them have trained themselves to judge, and without his being called upon to give any special proof of his capacity for it, or any one else being invited to do so. A photograph of the deceased, together with his latest garments, are furnished; and the contract is signed with little if any inquiry into the actual cost or value of the equivalent to be rendered. In due time a statue is made, and put up with much ceremony and laudation of the press. At this state all the parties are content; for the artist has his fame and money, and the public have got one more statue which they have welcomed in amiable faith at its being what they bargained for. Soon, however, a reaction begins. I tell what I have witnessed. One spectator, more hardy in his opinions than the mass, fails to discover in the effigy *him* they sought to honor. The doubt spreads, criticism is awakened, and the fact is proven. If it were a ship, locomotive, or style of goods not up to the contract, it would be returned to the maker. But a statue, although done on business rules, claims an exemption in its own favor. Though it be so ridiculous in pose that every street-boy flings his joke at it as he runs by, it must be put up, and tenderly cared for, at much additional cost, forever. An ordinary nuisance may be abated by a grand jury, but for such an one there is no remedy except in some great catastrophe of nature or outbreak of human wrath.

*How to get good sculpture.*

If we employed, irrespective of nationality and personal engineering of claims, whoever could most faithfully and thoroughly execute the desired object, there would be no increase of these spineless figures whose clothes are either torn asunder from overstuffing, like an overloaded sack of grain, or else seem as if dropping from want of a supporting anatomy; no more stone-dolls to amuse the wits of society, perplex the honest student of art, exasperate the descendants of the *dis*honored dead, or vex the living. Instead, if we had nothing greatly to admire, there would be nothing greatly to condemn. Suppose our average portrait-statues were no better than those of the eminent Florentines that adorn the cortile of the Uffizi; they would be respectably done, serve their purpose very well, and cost not one third of what is now given for abortions. Indeed, even less, for these were notoriously cheap.[1] Some were made for less than

six thousand francs, or twelve hundred dollars, the artist finding his own marble.

As my aim in this chapter is to be as practical as possible, I will add a few words here regarding prices. *Prices of statuary.*

It is due to the givers that they should have some criterion of the actual cost of what they buy in this shape, especially as the disposition now is to give lavishly without inquiry. I do not refer to works of genius. In no age have they ever been paid for as merchandise, nor should they ever be, if we would preserve genius untouched of worldliness. I refer to the excessive prices given for mediocre or worthless work, which ought to be regulated on the same principles of cost of production, and the actual value of the article, that obtain in every other business matter. Talent in art deserves to be as well remunerated as in science and trade: but there is no reason why it should command exceptional prices in America, in the form of painting or sculpture, while in France or Italy the compensation given is based on the ordinary laws of demand and supply. A Michael Angelo builds St. Peter's without price, toils eighty years in ascetic privation, leaves a modest sum to his relatives and a sublime legacy to the world. A Bernini lives in luxury, and dies a millionnaire. Raphael receives thirty crowns for his "Ezekiel," Frith £8,000 for a "Derby Day," and Bierdstadt $25,000 for a picture of the "Rocky Mountains." In this way the common mind discriminates between genius and talent. It seems hard on genius; but I doubt if it would be kept altogether faithful to its best instincts, were it much petted and lavishly paid.

Consummate talent should not be grudged its gains, however large, because they are the legitimate fruit of labor, and the world largely benefits by it. But why pay as much or more for the inept or commonplace as would content the greatest skill? The "Webster" of Powers is by universal criticism considered to be as indifferent a representation of that statesman as could be fashioned, and without any redeeming æsthetic features. For the original statue lost at sea, the public paid $12,000; and for the present duplicate $7,000; in all, $19,000. It cost to cast these statues in Florence, bronze included, within a fraction of $3,300, which leaves almost $16,000 as the sum paid for the fabrication of the "clay model," the equal of which any clever artist could put up in a short time.[1] In these days, when monu-

[1] The cost of making an ideal bust in Florence, including the marble, like the

ments to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars are put without reflection into hands to be executed that have never given proof of their capacity to excel in art, it is expedient to pause awhile over the pecuniary responsibility at stake. I am not speaking of works that display actual beauty, or energetic invention, or any really strong, characteristic trait. An American who could model a "Demosthenes" or "Aristides," would be cheaply paid at fifty thousand dollars, while one who did no better than the newly found gilt "Hercules" at Rome, would be dearly paid at five thousand for a similar monster. An author may employ ten times as much toil and brains on a book as it took to model the "Webster" or "Everett," and he would be esteemed fortunate were he to receive one tenth of their cost for his copyright.

When we can secure a sculptor who can model like Donatello or Lucca della Robbia, or paint our walls like Piero della Francesca or D. Ghirlandajo, not to mention greater names, all the money we lavish on them will be a blessing to the world, and only a limited compensation to the artist. But every false or weak man brought forward, crowds out a true one. As we have only a limited time and capacity to enjoy, it is important that our means be not wasted and our desires frustrated.

If competition be freely invited, the fear of losing his position would spur the American sculptor to that amount of study which is absolutely necessary for him, if he would compete with the European in the quality of his work, not to speak of surpassing him, — which I believe he could, judging from the progress made in busts, and some ideal statues and compositions of persons not yet known to fame, were he to pay the same attention to his preliminary education that his rival does. With Americans, and English too, it is quite common, after learning to draw a few common objects in a common way, to open a studio, and

usual run of fancy heads, is eighty to one hundred dollars by contract. A portrait-bust, life-size, costs higher, and it is less remunerative because seldom repeated; but two hundred dollars would cover the cost of the bust, including the time in taking the clay model. A heroic-sized statue in marble costs about two thousand dollars to make; repetitions of the ordinary parlor statues, Eves, Greek Slaves, Judiths, and their like, from eight hundred to one thousand. The profit on large monuments is so large as to turn towards sculpture considerable ordinary business talent, which, as regards art, had better be left to its common pursuits. The "Cavour" statue, second quality of Carrara marble, sixteen feet high, imposing and respectable, lately erected at Leghorn, cost by contract twenty-five thousand francs. We often pay ten thousand dollars for statues no better executed, of ordinary life-size.

advertise themselves as sculptors, sometimes obtaining great commissions before giving evidence of ability to draw the human figure correctly. Now something more is necessary to make a sculptor than to be able to pat clay into a seeming likeness of a man or woman, and then give the model to cheap workmen to be fashioned into marble, while the model-maker spends more time in studying the means to open the purses of patrons than to perfect himself in sculpture. How many of our sculptors, for instance, can draw the human figure, much less design a great composition or group? European galleries are filled with the drawings of the Giotteschi, Donatello, Ghiberti, and their peers; the modern European academicians and artists are rigorous in their life-studies, and we see the results in their superior knowledge and practice of form. But what will our galleries have to show, centuries hence, of original sketches and drawings in evidence of the imposing but fleeting reputations of the day? It is as easy to hire an accomplished professional designer in Italy as an experienced modeller; but no talent on their part will suffice to carry the fame of another to posterity, unless it is likewise based on his own capacity to execute, and the public find manual proof of it in his own handiwork. Recently a young Englishman advertised himself as a sculptor in one of the chief Italian cities. There chanced to enter his studio a distinguished painter, who asked him if he knew anything of drawing. He showed him some crude efforts of his school-days in evidence that he did. The painter kindly pointed out their utter unfitness as a qualification for his profession, advised him to take down his sign and to study seven years at least in life-schools before putting it out again, which, to the credit of the good sense of the premature sculptor, he determined to do. The artist whose heart is in his work, allows nothing to leave his studio which has not the marks of his hand. There is a nameless something which he alone can bestow; and that cannot be mechanically copied by the most skilled stone-cutter. Michael Angelo, the sincerest, greatest, loftiest-minded type of an artist that modern civilization has begotten, worked assiduously, night and day, on his statues, knowing well that no hireling could carry out his thought to its entire fulfilment, however serviceable he might be in preparing the statue to receive the final touches of his chisel. Examine, also, his numerous drawings and designs; the preparatory wax or terra-cotta models; the unmistakable evidences of the intense study which he bestowed

on every object before he deemed it to be worthy of being given to the public. As he practised, so did Razzi, Raphael, Leonardo, Giorgione, Titian, Correggio, and the whole galaxy of the "old masters," whose example, considering what they did, deserves to be more followed than it is at present by those of our men who look with pity, if they look at all, upon them, for being obliged to study so much.

*H. Hosmer.*

If they will not imitate the old men, I commend to them the example of a new woman, who has in this respect achieved reputation, and with it fortune. I speak of Harriet Hosmer. Her robust talent is the result of robust study and energy. Having determined to become a sculptor, the first thing to learn was the anatomy of the human figure, as well as scientific design. She is inclined to overdo the material in man, but it *exists*, whether as "Benton," "Puck," or a "Faun." They are solid, substantial beings, the fruit of a certain intellectual grasp of her subject, or facility of adaptation of the labors of others, mingled, when needs be, with genuine humor of her own. Despite the cumbersome, conventional "Zenobia," a claptrap statue intended for popular exhibitions, the influence of Miss Hosmer is a sound one, inasmuch as it is based on fundamental study, and a determination to win her position by hard work. It is also evident that she thinks the old masters can teach her something, by the use she at times makes of their conceptions. Her style is a decided rebuke to inane sentimentalists of the Powers class, which is a weak echo of the third-rate classical manner after it had abandoned beauty for prettiness. Miss Hosmer's manner is thoroughly realistic. Her attempt at the pretty in "Zenobia" was a decided failure, because her invention and skill do not run in this direction. She has a knowledge of form not possessed by the sentimentalists whose works are so commonly praised for that feature, and their charming idealism of character, though really without merit in either. With them one type of head, borrowed from the antique, made characterless in the transmission, does duty for numberless types of sentiments, all bearing the same monotonous outlines of features and sameness of expression. Idealism of this sort cloys the brain as sweetmeats the stomach. If beauty, unlit of soul, soon becomes tiresome, mere prettiness does much sooner. In this kind of statuary there is a certain mechanical roundness and smoothness of surface, which passes for art. But let the spectator go straightway from their daintily polished limbs, so like ivory turn-

ing, to good examples of antique and mediæval work, say from the "Greek Slave" or "Eve" of Powers, to the "Theseus" of the Parthenon, the "Athlete" of the Vatican, or the "St. George" of Donatello, and he will at once detect the vital distinction between delicate external finish and truthful form. Life in a statue is analogous to life in a man in its organic appearance, so far as form can express it. Unless it has the same structural look of a surface answering to the anatomy within, bones, joints, muscles, nerves, veins, viscera, heart, lungs, and brains beneath, so to speak, a flexible, marble skin, fitting them, as in the live being, with an imperceptible gradation of curves that respond to every movement or position, — unless the statue suggests in some degree this organization, it is an artistic failure. The Greek sculptor, by close observation of the vital functions of nature, joined to the assiduous use of his chisel, acquired a certain instinct or feeling for form which guided him aright, and imparts itself almost unconsciously to the spectator. Regard for a moment the time-eaten "Torso" of the Vatican. Beneath its riddled surface, so exquisitely graduated in action and shape to the internal organs, we see the immense muscular power and gigantic strength of frame. Despite the mutilation, it asserts itself a complete, living being; the whole idea leaps from the broken mass, and, like the "Prisoners" of Michael Angelo in the Louvre, it dwarfs all adjacent work, by whomsoever done.

Elaboration of surface fails to compensate for the loss of that structural unity which puts each part in its exact relation to the organic whole. But something more is requisite. A statue presumes truth of intellectual as well as anatomical characterization. No work challenges criticism so boldly. It says, in public, as one man meets his peer, "Know me." If there be defect in modelling, yet strength of character, the greater truth charitably hides the absence of the latter, and we recognize our friend. The drawback to American sculpture in general is its defective modelling and character. Palmer evidently seeks to avoid inane idealism, but goes too far in the opposite direction. He has fancy, but errs in selection. His principle of going direct to nature is correct, but the choice becomes ignoble or common. The American type of female beauty, which he aims to express, in his hands becomes heavy and com monplace; the limbs often look spongy, and the features, though naïve, coarse and unrefined. This is the more to be regretted, because the spiritual and intellectual elements of our best de-

veloped women are such that, joined to their extremely fine physical organization, we might expect to combine out of them for sculpture an idealism of type and form which should mark for our race a higher standard of beauty and aim in life than even the old Grecian.

It would be folly to consider some sculpture seriously. Clark Mills' equestrian statues look like prodigious congressional jokes on art, or amiable weaknesses, similar to the commission for a heroic statue given to a young miss who had never seen a real one, and which must be constructed out of her own consciousness. The nation now looks for this by-play periodically at the hands of its Conscript Fathers. But the humor becomes too broad when it puts the grave Washington astride a Bucephalian burlesque, with the horse's tail curling so tightly between his legs as to make him recoil, as if bracing firmly against a whirlwind. This, too, when Brown had already shown his capacity to treat the subject so worthily in the dignified and spirited "Washington" of Union Square, New York. Ball's, in Boston, does more justice to the action of the horse than his rider, who sits well, is conscientiously and patiently modelled, giving a fair likeness of the original as to form and costume, but is no adequate appreciation of his greatest qualities, besides showing a fiddler-like movement of the right arm, with the drawn sword. Ball's realism is too sturdy. His subjects are so intensely homely and external as to make one, while looking at them, all but disbelieve in the immortality of the soul.

*Brown. Ball.*

Jackson's realism is broader and more inventive. He realizes character, and hints at considerable undeveloped force in himself. His allegorical group, to be placed over one of the gates of the reservoir of New York, is a well-composed, decorative work, appropriate and forcible in detail and mass.

Ward is a realist of still superior stamp. He and his productions have an artistic ring of the older time, joined to the vigorous new thought of the present. Both Ward and Brown do what they know, and know what they do. Wanting as we are in idealistic art proper, we may safely place the reputation of our sculpture, in comparison with the living European, in their hands. Ward's "Indian Hunter," as did Hosmer's "Sleeping Faun," upheld American sculpture with honor for clever invention and realistic force, particularly the "Hunter," which was an indigenous idea, in the Exposition of 1867 at Paris.

*Ward.*

*Story.*

When I wrote the "Art-Idea," I hoped so much of American art that now, in looking over the product of the intervening time, I fear my wishes misled my judgment. For a brief moment it really appeared as if in Story we had, at last, something that savored of genius. But a closer examination of his numerous efforts dispels this illusion. Industrious he assuredly is, possessing fancy and some skill of invention; but his strong point is his receptive faculty, which gets good from others, and strains it through his own mind. His antiquarian knowledge serves him well in the decorative part of his sculpture. Ornaments and accessories are rightly chosen and tastefully placed, though the choice of motives appears somewhat sensational. "Cleopatra poisoning Herself," "Judith having slain Holofernes," "Medea intending the Murder of her Children," "Delilah after betraying Samson," "Saul mad," and "Sappho meditating Suicide," are hazardous topics even for genius. How genius works, small things show as well as great; indeed, the little fact becomes the new and great one by its treatment. There is a masterly sketch in the Vatican of "St. Jerome," by Leonardo. The usual way, even with the best of the "old masters," was to make the lion a sleek, well-behaved animal, quietly sleeping, while the saint pounded his breast with a stone until it was gory. Leonardo's lion smells the blood, and, with the instinct of the forest, turns and roars at him in maddened sympathy. Da Vinci comprehended what a wild beast must do under the circumstances, and by the exhibition of its instinct, though subdued in its rage by the miraculous magnetism of the saint, brings most forcibly home to us the agony of his desert-life.

The "Moses" of Michael Angelo is every inch a prophet-king, majestic and fearful to gaze upon, while the action that intensifies his character is his unconscious handling of his long beard. Only a great artist conceives and executes details like this and that of the lion in such a way as to emphasize the entire conception. The "Saul" of Story is his best work, because, having the "Moses" at hand, he bestows on it a somewhat similar feature and treatment. Contrast, however, the idea and feeling as it passes from genius to talent, and note the gulf between them! "Saul" has a certain breadth and imposingness of whole which make one marvel more at the weak points of other statues. But it may be doubted if the action which was suited to the absorption in thought of the prophet, is one characteristic of a man

on the verge of frantic madness. It implies the repose of deep, sane meditation, not incipient frenzy. I have before me an archaic statuette in bronze of "Confucius," seated on a rock, holding his writings in his right hand. The Chinese artist, in his rude way, intended the philosopher and lawgiver of his nation to appear imposing, somewhat after the style of the "Moses." Instead, he looks burly and smiling, but is deeply reflecting, and apparently watching the world beneath him, while with his left hand he toys unconsciously with his venerable beard. Genius, for this action is a touch of it in the Oriental image, speaks the same language in the Chinese and Tuscan artists, though so widely separated by time and distance. The American, in appropriating, misapplies it.

Story's workmanship is solid and good, but he gives little evidence of a feeling for beauty, or even grace. Prettiness, however, in his hands has not the insipidity of the ordinary sentimentalists. In his "Sphinx" and "Cupid," his manner is melodramatic, with a tendency to forced conceit. The motive is taken out of the sublime into the little; the mystical let down to the curious-sensual, with whatever compensation dainty finish can bestow.

So much ambitious ideal work as his studio shows, interspersed as it is with heroic-sized portraiture, of which the "Quincy" is the best, and "Everett" the worst example, and bad busts like the Brownings, to be well done, cannot be crowded into a few years. Such haste of conception and execution necessarily causes many defects. Though the expression of passionate sorrow in "Delilah" is strongly given, the shoulders are weak and ill proportioned; "Sappho" has a vapid face and a feeble figure; the drapery of "Medea" clings too tight; "Cleopatra" sits uneasily because of awkwardly placed hips; and Story has forgotten that she was wholly Greek in race and culture; her face has no ethnographical decisive type, and the mouth is vulgar. Noses are in general ignoble and carelessly modelled. The African "Sibyl" is the most original and best executed. These productions, although superior in thought and aim to most of those of the school, leave the impression of incompleteness of idea and superficial treatment.

*American architecture.*

Perhaps America is destined to make its most rapid artistic development in architecture. Its national exigencies point to this, because a wealthy democracy has as great

a passion to be housed magnificently as any aristocracy. The most beautiful palaces of the Old World were built by merchants. Ours imitate them in cost, if not in taste. The present aim is sumptuous comfort and upholstery decoration; and it is seldom that an architect of correct principles is permitted to carry out his ideas. He is required to be a house or shop builder, and forego his highest functions of beauty builder, which, if allowed, he might make to agree with the former. The effect is seen in its worst in the prevailing centipede style of stores, mounted as they are on spindle iron legs and a substructure of plate-glass, than which anything move viciously threatening in appearance and incongruous in adaptation could not be invented.[1] Both dwellings and shops have become greedy of ornamentation, inside and out; but its laws are so misapplied, that taste is mostly sacrificed to a crude display of inappropriate or unmeaning decorative detail, or jumbled from various types of architecture, the whole resulting in a patchwork of styles almost as strangely ugly and ill chosen as what came into vogue during the later Renaissance. Still, as knowledge is increasing and better examples multiplying, we may hope for the development of a national architecture which, while securing the essentials of light, ventilation, and shelter, shall admit enough of beauty to gratify the instinctive craving for it. Our wants and aims are more diversified and freer in expansion than those of any past people. There must arise a corresponding expression in architecture, the concrete growing out of the abstract, just as the rock and plant come from the primary elements in nature, adapting themselves with unerring instinct to their parent soils. How, when, and by whom our art will thus be crowned, is a secret of God. When the white workman turned rebel, a negro assistant completed the cast of Crawford's "Liberty," which now surmounts the dome of the Capitol at Washington.

Architecture cannot be properly treated in my brief space. I can only hint what it wants by telling what it is. Its present

[1] If much money and some architectural invention or pretension, as in the Sears' buildings, Boston, are attempted, the constructive effect of the whole and beauty of detail are certain to be marred or wholly lost by extravagant advertising signs. Indeed, the majority of expensive edifices in America for business purposes are but prodigious show cards; whole costly façades being hidden by huge letters of the alphabet. That advertising and architecture can be made to agree in general effect, and the former made an agreeable feature of the ornamentation of the latter, the newly erected façade of the Corsi palace at Florence sufficiently demonstrates.

features are transitory, borrowed of the Old World, and either tortured into inelegance or fashioned into crudity, just as the ambitions of wealth, and exigencies of trade, without any æsthetic cravings, demand. Painting and sculpture speak to us as we speak to one another. However fast our friendship, there is something in every man that does not come up to our ideal. So in the individual arts. But, as I have before remarked, architecture puts them all in unity with its mass, and appeals to our consciousness on the great plane of nature itself, evoking primarily a synthetic pleasure in it as a whole rather than an analytic delight of detail. In this respect it moves us as does orchestral music. This unspoken sympathy with our highest aspirations is most soothing and cheering. I never pass Giotto's Campanile without feeling my heart lightened, as if a celestial ray had descended upon me. When sorrowing or suffering, I go to his Duomo, walk about it, and am comforted in its presence, not from any association of creed, but because it is a triumphant expression of the great human soul of its belief in the Infinite. Until America has produced something analogous to the genius of the Old World in art, it behooves us, in speaking of our juvenile efforts, to place them on their actual level in the scale of civilization.

Were the standard of knowledge of art with us equal to that of almost any other branch of education, the most of what I have said, would be needless truism. I give it because of the much conceited assertion and many questions of elementary nature, that come to me from persons by whom I am only too happy to be instructed in those matters of science or general affairs to which they have given thought. This ignorance is the result of inattention and indifference to the subject. The latter invariably disappears with the former. But it is extremely difficult to get an American to look at it seriously, other than in an utilitarian or conservative aspect. Consequently, in the present apathy of feeling in regard to art, those who would urge its claims with a sincere desire to have them considered, must first advance those which really are secondary, fundamentally viewed. The imperative, absolute, final function of art is enjoyment. But the essentials of its being are such that it cannot exist in a healthful condition without political and religious liberty, and those intel lectual and social conditions which best promote the moral and physical welfare of society. Art creates a Central Park. Its beauty and sanitary advantages are just so much counterpoise to

the criminal contagion and foul air of the slums of New York. Besides, therefore, their purely æsthetic features, public parks are moral physical reformers on a scale that reaches every inhabitant of a city. I might enlarge on the taxable property and new industries they create; but this is too obvious an argument to require mention in this connection.

The educational advantages of galleries and museums, and their conservative and refining influence on society, in teaching respect for the past, and affording the means of estimating the actual progress of manners and ideas of various races, are less notably considered. In America the popular notion of them is simply as depositories of curiosities to amuse an idle hour, but not of sufficient importance to be critically examined. The general impression of their contents is that they are well enough for those who made them, but we have got beyond all this. Even for no higher purpose they deserve to be multiplied; for they beguile many from haunts of vice, and in the end will assuredly come to be esteemed on more rational if not æsthetic grounds. As it has taken several centuries to reduce the sense of beauty in us as a race to a mere negative state, probably it will take as many more of culture and encouragement in the opposite direction to make it a vital force again. Meantime, it is wise in its advocates to urge it onward by presenting it in that shape which commends it most strongly to the interests and intelligence of the people, even if its highest aspects are momentarily obscured.

It will be urged against me, as it has already been, that I depreciate my country's art, and am hostile to her artists. But what do we gain in the end by exaggerations of any sort? If we deceive ourselves, the rest of the world sees the truth, and jeers us for lying. Bonaparte's false bulletins do not make him any greater as a general, but infinitely less as a man. I must give the truth in art precisely as I see it in relation to the universal point of view from which I have tried to comprehend the subject as a whole. Artists and nationality become of secondary consideration to art itself. Much as I value the good will of every one, I cannot consent to suppress my own convictions lest offence be taken by those who look at the topic in a narrower or more personal sense. Yet those who have made a study of art, have no need of my experiences. On the other hand, those to whom they may be necessary, are likely to dislike me for criticising their favorite notions, or reject them in disgust

at first sight. There are already too many either absolutely ignorant critics or those who wish to make every one feel comfortable at the expense of truth and the hindrance of real progress: amiable optimists, whose fulsome, indiscriminating praise must be disagreeable to every right-minded artist. The existence of "The Nation" weekly paper of New York proves that an independent criticism of men, political measures, and literature, irrespective of party and clique, although a new feature, is welcome to an increasing class of readers. In time it will be so with my theme. Meanwhile, I have to thank the "London Reader" of October, 1864, in its notice of "Art-Idea," for its appreciation of my endeavor. It says, "The fervent gravity with which the author treats the subject as a whole, the deep importance which he attaches to fine art as a manifestation of the human soul and one great influence upon it, the *missionary* [thanks for the word] energy wherewith he preaches his creed," etc. "To say that this American author is quite up to the general European level of cultivated opinion on such topics, would be too little; whether in Europe or America, he would belong to the select few who have spent a deal of time and thought upon the subject, and whose opinion may mostly be accepted, and, when not accepted, still acknowledged as qualified." Also the "Saturday Review" observes, "We venture to advise Mr. Jarves to employ his powers of observation and language in a detailed criticism of the modern European schools. This might confer on the English-reading public a benefit which they have not yet received."

I plead guilty to egotism in these quotations; but without some words of recognition and encouragement from qualified persons, I should scarcely be justified in urging an unwelcome theme on my countrymen from only my own sense of duty, without other endorsement than individual judgment or enthusiasm. In the present condition of art at home, the sole compensation for the time and toil given to the subject, lies in the approval of the few who also study it as a means to a great national end, as well as personal culture.

None but the experienced can know the weight of public opprobrium and social misconception that is the lot of an art critic, if his opinions run counter to the views of interested parties. The topic itself is a delicate one, and the artistic temperament, when not well balanced by intellectual training, sensitive and not unfrequently irritable and jealous. An author receives a criticism with thankfulness that would make many an artist con-

sider himself to be the most ill used of men. But this morbid sensitiveness is only an additional reason why he should be subjected to the same rules of criticism as any other profession. An unjust review is as likely to spoil the sale of a book as of a picture. A just criticism, if accepted as given, will help educate author and artist. Either, in publishing his work, takes his chance of success, as a general in giving battle. Whatever happens, in the main the result lies in him. Some fight for one sort of victory, and some for another. He who fights for truth, must expect to take as well as give hard knocks. If the artist fights for less, his reward will be apportioned to his aim. Even in those rare instances of excessive sensitiveness or incapacity of obtaining a hearing, real merit is sure in the end to beat blatant self-assertion and flimsy execution. The wronged must work and wait.

Most criticism, until recently, has been done in behalf of some private consideration rather than in the interest of the people at large. Duty to the public is imperative; friendship is a side-issue, agreeable or painful, as it may happen. Sometimes there is a naïveté in the complaints of injustice done which makes one heartily wish he could do all that is desired. Roe once said to me of Doe, "I think your remarks are just, but you say too much of him and too little of me."

Possibly Roe was in the right. But the artist who keeps primarily in view art itself, that is to say, its "*vertu*," or the completed perfection and fitness of its resources and means to the contemplated end, clinging to the vital sense of the Latin "virtus" (meaning the manhood or the supreme excellence of an object) as his final aim, — such an one will say to any critic what was said once to me by a sensitive, right-minded sculptor: "I prefer to have the shortcomings of my work pointed out, than to have it inordinately praised in the ordinary tone of our criticism, regardless of any intelligent understanding of its qualities." The genuine artist is sometimes discouraged at the apparent insensibility of the average patron to his finest ideal conceptions, and the readiness with which he buys the commonest realistic works, like the "Boy on the Tub whittling," or the "Girl untying her Shoe," etc. Each style has its distinct aim; one to bestow ideas and beauty on those who can appreciate them, the other to get as much money in exchange for as little brains and labor as possible. To effect this, a business tact is requisite. As most patrons are business men, who buy on the whim of the moment, without having bestowed

any serious consideration on art, they are readily attracted by those mental qualities and personal habits most in accord with their own Mistaking secondary for primary effects, they are easily put into sympathy with the business artist, who is so intelligible in his speech and acts, and whose works have a prosaic character or material aim. On the other hand, the unbusiness-like temperament and manner of a true artist are liable to misconception, while his ideas and ambitions are apt to be antagonistic to those who have not made art a special study, or whose feelings do not flow in the same æsthetic current. Hence the fictitious artist will make money, while the real one must all but starve until his merit becomes known to cultivated amateurs. I am surprised at the little shrewdness shown even by the practical-minded artists, especially our sculptors in their choice of motives from others, adhering as they do so largely to stale classicalisms, personages of the Bible, and the commonplaces of every-day life, when Blake's designs, the Campana bas-reliefs, and the numerous illustrated works on antique and mediæval monuments, and sculpture and painting in general, published during the past one hundred years in Italy, open to them rich mines of motives and suggestions almost unknown, certainly unworked, in this generation. Could any thing be more sublime, more Christian in idea, or better adapted to a sepulchral monument than Blake's illustration of "Death's Door" in Blair's "Grave." His "Book of Job" is literally alive with glorious hints to sculptors. So also are the best Etruscan compositions. It is not needful to plagiarize outright, but to adopt and adapt the great and beautiful conceptions of the past to our own spiritual needs; filling the gap which exists in high art between the actual genius of other days and the prolific talent of our own, with works of a suggestive character until the time arrive for original genius to descend to us in fresh forms.

Meantime there is a favorable symptom for ideal art in the recent attempts of some of the younger men to produce work of a superior character. Vedder's characteristic conceptions, as yet unrealized in permanent paintings, I spoke of in the "Art-Idea." Since then I have seen a sketch for a great picture, by Craig of Florence, called the "Vanishing of the Illusions of Youth," quite Blake-like in feeling and meaning. Gould's breezy "West Wind" is another ingenious attempt to escape from the bondage of effete personifications into fresher, pertinent styles; and his colossal head of "Christ," as an opposing conception to that of "Satan," also by him, both now in

his studio at Florence, is one of the finest felt and conceived idealisms in modern sculpture. Gould has shown the rare faculty, genius it really is, of throwing into form, in a broad, interpenetrative way, the essential feeling and character of the Tempter and of the Saviour, as the impersonifications of the evil and good principles inherent in humanity, irrespective of any tamperings with his own individuality, or being misled into the little or pretty. They are positive conceptions; both of a high, although widely differing quality of physical beauty; intellect paramount in the "Devil," love in the "Christ;" each largely treated, Shakespearian in force of personality. So far as my observation extends, they are the most complete and profound idealisms in our sculpture; and the time will come in America when, as with Blake's compositions in England, their merits will be appreciated, if not by the multitude, by those who comprehend what high art aspires to render. Brackett's bust of John Brown, owned by Mrs. G. Stearns, Medford, is of similar characteristic excellence. Exhibiting with Olympian breadth of sentiment the intense, moral heroism of the reformer, it is an American type of a Jove, one of those rare surprises in art, irrespective of technical finish or perfection in modelling, which shows in what high degree the artist was impressed by the soul of his sitter. Connolly's allegorical group of "Death and Honor," consisting of five figures and a horse in vigorous action, on which Death sits, revelling in slaughter, having just struck down Courage, Perseverance, and Strength, but stopped and disarmed by Honor, if not all a nice æsthetic taste would require in its treatment, is a profound idea, harmoniously put into plastic form, and calculated to incite the ambition of other of our young sculptors. Its drawbacks are inexplicable disturbing draperies, defective muscular modelling, and some want of unity in proportions, an introduction of unnecessary lines, which knots it into a somewhat confused mass and superfluous action, like the tearing down by Honor of the banner of Death, causing a rhetorical redundancy, as it were, of composition, at the expense of artistic repose and simplicity, and some slight crudity of application in the allegory as an entirety.

Criticism, however, is not the object of this book. It has been secondary and partial, and indulged only to illustrate the rules and principles which underlie art in general. There is much of good and bad art, not necessary to mention in this connection. But that which is given may assist the reader to be his own critic.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## THE MINOR ARTS. — ORNAMENT AND DECORATION.

IN the preceding chapters, I have more especially kept in sight painting, sculpture, and architecture in their superior æsthetic and natural aspects. My aim would be incomplete were not a glance given to art in its more social and domestic phase, in which, asserting its being exclusively for its own sake, irrespective of teaching, worship, or illustration, it enters into familiar relations with every individual and object, in the shape of Ornament or Decoration; its purpose being to gratify taste by superadding beauty to utility, as well as to evoke it regardless of any practical use. In this form, art is an æsthetic distribution and combination of details, rather than of masses. It adorns speech, literature, manners, dress, utensils, buildings and grounds, public and private; in short, every thing man invents; for there is nothing too homely or common, not to be made more gratifying to our senses by fitting ornamention or graceful outline. Without this æsthetic addition, although the utility of an object be complete, our satisfaction in it is incomplete.

*Final aim of ornament. Æsthetic repose.*

The final aim of ornamentation is to produce intellectual repose, or that mental quietude which comes of gratified cravings after the ideal, just as a belief in the immortality of the soul becomes a consolation in its immediate shortcomings. Every human being, from the baby in arms or the untutored savage to the most cultivated mind, feels the force of this instinct, and in some way or other strives to gratify it. However much people may disagree in their definition of beauty, they all desire it, unless they be of that rare defective mental organization which cannot see deity or beauty in any created thing.

Æsthetic repose comes from harmony, fitness, and adaptation; the subordination of the minor functions to the major, and the perfect interblending of the part with the whole. Excessive decoration, like exaggeration of language, destroys the intent.

Misplaced ornament is equivalent to mistakes in grammar, causing confusion and vulgarity. The style of dress, manners, speech; the character of the things a man surrounds himself with; the degree and quality of his ornamentation; these announce his intellectual rank to his neighbor. As taste begets refinement, the "rough" disappears before the gentleman. I now confine my view to æsthetics as a refining social element, admitting that a cultivated taste and irreproachable exterior can accompany a selfish and depraved will. Still the world gains by this disguise; for without it there would exist the brutal villain, while no one can act the gentleman or acquire an accomplishment without benefitting society, and mitigating the evil within himself.

I shall not give a technical exposition of ornamentation, but only refer to some of its rules and general features. A fact that has had its natural birth, growth, and death, eludes resuscitation; but the principle which was the germ of the fact belongs to whoever can detect and apply it. Modern practice overlooks this law of nature too much. Instead of seeking to inform itself of those subtle laws which were discovered and applied to decoration by the ancients and mediævalists, it spends its means and labor in futile attempts to repeat their works by the cheapened processes of manufacture. We get heaps of classical and mediæval designs, without the informing life of the originals, and their conscious sympathy with their own times. Far better is it to preserve the models for instruction in museums than to debase their forms, and pervert their spirit, by mechanical enterprises for our adornment. Animated by their beauty, we might then hope to see invented forms no less appropriate and beautiful, as regards our civilization, than theirs appear in the light of antiquity. No great work has ever been written in a dead tongue. Whatever mind there is in the reproduction of antique ornaments, it is a voice from the tomb of nations, which comes to us as hollow as the language of ghosts

*Rule of Fashion.*

How can it be otherwise? These objects are revived simply as caprices of fashion, which would miss its purpose were it to bring into vogue anything of permanent interest and value. If by hazard it hits on the beautiful, it hastens to substitute for it some fresh, ignoble conceit, lest the good one should take firm root in popular favor. In old times, when brains guided hands in fashioning objects of art, the mind of the artist got into his work, and no two things were ever made

precisely alike. Our age holds to cheapening and multiplying articles, rather than to their artistic worth. Hence its productive energies tend to substitute mechanical for æsthetic excellence, and to employ machinery in place of fingers. Everywhere we meet lifeless repetitions of the emasculated ancient, or wearisome ones of modern invention, *manufactured*, rather than MADE, as ornament once was, to the detriment of the growth of original artistic talent in this direction. Most modern inventions betray poverty of thought, and lack of feeling; a want of comprehension of æsthetics and levity of choice, giving the preference to the meretricious pretty or grotesque ugly over the actually beautiful. Especially do they fail in coloring and graceful form in comparison with the old, though they excel in nice finish and accurate workmanship; in fine, those mechanical points which have been gained at the loss of superior qualities; so that the standard of excellence by which the one is judged differs essentially from that of the other, while artistic instinct and training have deteriorated accordingly during the past two centuries.

Reference is not made to the production of the endless variety of objects which may be called the gossip of art, the chief site of manufacture of which is Paris, with the sole intent to tickle the eye for an instant and then give way to a fresher novelty equally without any serious reason of being, but to those that make a distinctive claim to art. Nor would I include in ornamentation proper the representation of natural objects, like animals, birds, flowers, and insects exactly after life. As illustration, they have an appropriate value. Ornament does not aim at giving realistic truth; for it rejoices not in teaching or representing the natural fact, but in giving sensuous or suggestive delight, doing for the eye what music does to the ear. It prefers to soothe or seduce the imagination and senses into dreamy enjoyment by mystical harmonies of form and color, which may hint at the variety of the seen or unseen in nature without literally representing anything of either world. Next to preaching a moral, the worst style of ornament is that of exact imitation. The best ornament has no meaning or common sense to it. Its interpretation must come from the spectator, and be different from his neighbor's. Like cloud-forms and hues, each change of mood or position should put a new aspect on its shapes and colors. This is its supreme test. As it falls short, it fails of its legitimate purpose.

Judged by this criterion, those races which we esteem to be

the most heathen or savage have the finer instincts, and the Anglo-Saxons the coarser. A Polynesian, Hindoo, or native of Japan sucks in with his mother's milk a sense so keen and clairvoyant in respect to ornament, that he appears as if endowed with a special faculty for it of an almost spiritual quality of apprehension, while the American and Englishman are quite destitute, not only of this, but of that subtile mental appreciation of its true purpose which equally distinguish them. In compensation, we have gumption, or that faculty that looks more to getting force and comfort out of the universe than sensuous beauty or mystical delight in it. Yet the Asiatic's life is more sensual than the European's, whose imagination, when moved, takes a purer view both of art and matter.

Whatever feeling for beauty the coming American may possess, that of the present one is the most obtuse or wanting of any people, except the English. On them, however, cultivation begins to tell, while among Americans the mixture of bloods derived from the more æsthetic races has the same effect. Still no means are provided, as in England, to educate the instinct; nor is there yet any practical apprehension of the value of art in giving more life to its manufactures, and enabling them to compete in elegance, as they do in other respects, with those of foreign nations. Nothing is more apparent than the absence of beauty in the article itself, and the utter unconsciousness of it in the artisan and the public, though the aim be to make it pleasurable as well as useful. The end in view is to make the thing as serviceable as possible at the least possible cost. No rule could more effectually extinguish beauty, and make the masses forget its functions, even in ornamental work, like jewelry or plate. Whatever of good is seen is sure to have come from a foreign source. Yet the American, while adhering closely to his utilitarian and economical principles, has unwittingly, in some objects to which his heart equally with his hand has been devoted, developed a degree of beauty in them that no other nation equals. His clipper-ships, fire-engines, locomotives, and some of his machinery and tools combine that equilibrium of lines, proportions, and masses which are among the fundamental causes of abstract beauty. Their success in producing broad, general effects out of a few simple elements, and of admirable adaptation of means to ends, as nature evolves beauty out of the common and practical, covers these things with a certain atmosphere of poetry, and is an indication of what may happen to the rest

of his work when he puts into it an equal amount of heart and knowledge.

Out of a similar love of his paddle or war-club, the savage makes us overlook their uses in their fineness of lines, and delicate carving of meaningless, varied patterns, for which he has no law, but an instinct derived from a close observation of nature. He can give no reason for them, except that they please him. But his blind feeling is a truer guide in ornament than much of the teaching of civilized schools of design. For instance, the colors of the *tapas* of the Polynesian women are often so judiciously massed and balanced as to produce agreeable effects, such as our paper or print manufacturers, with all their science, fail to rival.

Give a New England girl worsted colors and a needle, and forthwith she works out a moral sampler and pictorial alphabet or multiplication-table, hideous in design and unharmonious in coloring. These samplers are embryonic in her blood, as is her natural aptitude for ugliness in dress, her home adornments, and whatever in this stage of her æsthetic development represents her passion for beauty. She shows a decided preference of angles to curves, of tidy stiffness and whitewash cleanliness to æsthetic disarray and opalescent gleam of colors. Many generations of puritanical training have wrought in her this abnegation of one of the most fertile sources of happiness God has implanted in the human mind; and it will take several generations of opposite training to recall it. Our English ancestors, a few centuries ago, had as keen an enjoyment of their cathedrals, costumes, and ceremonies as other Europeans had of theirs; but it died out when it was confused with moral questions and attacked on religious grounds. Its resuscitation will be quickened by its being again needed in the higher interest of civilization as an antidote to the soul-wilting materialism which, sooner or later, comes to a life that fears beauty as a sin, and is incapable of discriminating between the false and true in religion.

There is as wide a difference of artistic qualities between the best European and Asiatic textile fabrics as between the Yankee sampler and the Hawaiian *tapa*. The finest French calicoes and shawls are gross in texture and garish in color beside the best productions of Hindoo fingers and toes, for both are made to work. By countless generations of training, the Hindoo has developed an organization so acute to discern and apply to his textile fabrics the subtlest laws of design and coloring, that the

European, though aided by scientific machinery, cannot rival him. That East Indian taste in ornamentation and dexterity of fabrication is much superior to the best European, their "woven air," as their finest muslin is poetically termed, amply shows. No costly fabrics of French looms equal this. However splendid and durable they may be, the Asiatic fabric surpasses them in both; uniting strength of substance to an exquisite delicacy of coloring and mystic design to a degree that imparts to them an almost spiritual element. The Hindoo's taste has none of the fickleness of the European. Having invented something which really becomes him, he adheres to it for centuries. On the contrary, no sooner have we fashioned a garment into some semblance of beautiful adaptation to its purpose than we hasten to bring it into disrepute to benefit those who cater to the public ignorance and caprice. Fashion, which might be made a friend of taste, in the main is its enemy; for it never looks twice at beauty without trying to destroy it. The French fix the fashions for modern civilization, but with questionable benefit. Though having some taste in dress and the minor arts, they subordinate it to the desire to gain money in the briefest time at the expense of all other peoples, by a constant succession of "novelties," made to sell and be consumed quickly. Their principle, instead of repose, is to beget restlessness of device and rapid disaffection; than which nothing can be more opposed to true æsthetic training. All that is picturesque and graceful in indigenous costumes and life, is disappearing before Parisian toilets and habits. The selfishness of trade enslaves the taste of France, and hinders or debases that of the rest of the world. It must continue to be so as long as the public of any country are too ignorant or apathetic to decide for themselves what best befits them, but permit the expression of taste to be the monopoly of one class, whose interest is to banish all individual judgment as to what is best, regardless of a neighbor's style, to reduce all consumers to a monotonous resemblance or imitation of one another, and never allow anything of permanent value to remain long enough in sight to familiarize the public with its merits. Virtually, the European law of fashion is the negative of that of beauty, besides being inconstant as the winds, despotic, and mercenary. Both governments and manufacturers esteem that national prosperity which shows the greatest balance-sheet of consumption, whether the article is needed or not, or is morally or æsthetically wholesome. Such trade is discreditable to

the judgment; for it reacts on its agents, and exposes them in their turn to selfish competitions, and the disastrous fluctuations occasioned by the periodical surfeits and changes of the things themselves, which are not permitted the opportunity even to attain perfection after their kind. If it be objected in the æsthetic point of view that a variety is essential, I answer, when the individual is trained to comprehend the laws of beauty, and given freedom of choice, his knowledge and free agency lead him to adopt whatever style best suits him and his position. We thus secure as great a variety in details as there are shades of character and taste, while remaining loyal to those fundamental principles which put the whole into a harmonious unity of national life. In his æsthetic being, the Oriental shows more common sense than the European, inasmuch as his fashions are more independent of the caprices of the manufacturer and the bizarre desires of a restless, unartistic public. With him a thing of beauty is a joy quite beyond the ban of fashion to cast into the mire, or be supplanted at a day's notice by some hideous invention of a crafty tradesman. Few persons consider how absurd is the common deference to fashion-plates, and their low origin and aim. Just as people begin to think for themselves in matters of taste, as in ethics or politics, will they decide on their own styles of decoration for their person and homes, and make them representative of their lives and means. Taste will then have an individualistic and educational value, instead of being the livery of a traffic, displayed for no better reason than leads one sheep to follow another in a heedless scamper. It will also stamp the nation's æsthetic character on the whole in the same way that a few great minds in science or literature represent its intellectual standard to others. Each race should be stimulated to develop its strength and beauty in those directions to which nature and circumstances most obviously incline it. The current slavishness to France is most foolish in itself, and pernicious in its effects to the manhood of that nation, as well as to those that submit to its dictations. Considering only her gain in money, it is natural that she makes prodigious efforts to keep her supremacy. But her success is only that of a great bazaar and caterer of amusements. As one after another of the false despotisms over mind or body that afflict mankind, disappear, real progress is made. When all nations become equally free, a harmonious variety of action and intelligence will make up that great human unity which is destined to give "peace and good will to men."

*Independent taste.*

We must not confound the vulgar aspect of fashions with those great changes which come over art at stated intervals of time, and are as fixed and systematic in operation as organic matter itself. Each creates definite types in accordance with underlying ideas. Evolved from permanent principles, though their forms are transitory, their inherent loveliness endures, and is cherished as a precious legacy of a lost art, even if the feeling that produced them has passed as completely out of our reach as the spent fragrance of a flower.

*Moral influence of a museum.*

Consider the moral aspect of a museum as a repository of the embodied ideas of a people! We wag our heads as we go by grave-yard epitaphs, knowing them to be as great liars as the old Cretans. If one could always see the true epitaph in letters of fire shining within the outward one, he would be aghast at the difference. A museum confesses that of the dead which their epitaphs hide. No need of clairvoyance here to read the truth; each fact discloses its origin and purpose, and a little education reveals the entire mystery. History thus becomes a tangible revelation, indiscreet at times as disturbing our prejudices, but a great dispeller of misconceptions and leveller of vanities. In this way it does its best service. To conserve beauty for our admiration and enjoyment is praiseworthy; but to make it show up our shortcomings, to give the means of measuring ourselves with others; to take the boasting out of people, by proving that their best, though differing from another's best, is no better, perhaps not its equal; to supplant pride by charity, ignorance by information, self-exultation by generous competition; this is the great service of a museum.

In this connection allusion must be made to a few of the phases of ornamental and decorative art, which have established for themselves a claim to be preserved for universal edification, but whose special inspirations having disappeared with their sources of being, their outward forms will never reappear in history as the visible talk and emotion of one of its brilliant periods, whatever effort may be made to imitate them as curiosities. In a large sense, taste is the image of the current morality of an epoch or individual, which books inadequately render. Writing therefore fails to give that impression of them which can come only from the objects themselves. There being no collections in America to refer to in support of my words, I shall make them as few as can be, in order not to seem to exaggerate in fact or theory.

The best period of ornament is the most remote one of European civilization; a fact which should make us somewhat less boastful of the nineteenth century after Christ. It does not detract from our advantages to admit that other times and peoples have not been left without profit and joy in their lives, though differing widely from ours.

*Classical and pagan ornamentation.*

Ancient Greece and Etruria afford the purest and most elegant forms of ornamental art, of consummate skill of workmanship and exquisite finish in bronze, ceramic ware, gems, jewelry, glass, in fine every durable material. The perfection attained in the superior forms of art was heightened, if possible, in its transmission to the lesser. There exist intaglii, vases, medals, and small bronzes, replete with the vital beauty of the contemporary sculpture; and yet on so small a scale is the design of some that the unassisted eye fails to take in all their truth and delicacy. The Romans initiated this fine work with spirit and skill, but with inferior manual precision as well as idealization. Italy retains her fashion of terra-cotta mouldings and reliefs, but coarse in execution and commonplace in invention in comparison with those which decorated the houses of their Etruscan ancestry. The same is true of the varied, light, and graceful vases and *pateræ*, whose phantom figures in mythological guise and broad, harmonious tints, make them one of the most intellectually suggestive of all known forms of ornament. Indeed, the Grecian and Etruscan instinct for fine forms and lines is as keen as that of Persians and East Indians for massing, balancing, and gradation of colors, with this notable difference, that whereas the latter retain some of their ancient skill, the former have lost theirs by the attrition of new ideas and fashions.

Complete isolation is the only safeguard in the course of time of any distinctive national trait or skill. In the highest Apennines, at St. Angelo in Vado, cut off from intercourse with the world, there still is made jewelry after the antique Etruscan style, though of ruder workmanship than the beautiful specimens now to be seen in the Gregorian, British, and Louvre museums, and Castellani's private collection at Rome.

The Orient furnishes the most exquisite ornamentation, in which color is the marked feature. In bronzes of their peculiar type, the Japanese and Chinese excel in varied design, movement, and quality of material. I speak only of their best artistic work of former periods; for, like the Occidentals, they now

make much cheap ornament merely to sell, and since Europe has come into competition with them in the Eastern markets, and increased the demand for their specialities, their skill and taste have greatly degenerated. Idealism with them is either transcendental nonsense, burlesque horror, or superlative ugliness. Apparently they aim at inventing what the Greeks avoided as a sin. Indeed, the imaginations of the European and Asiatic are as wide apart as possible in their creative and inventive art. The aim and feeling of the latter are too alien to our thought for much profit or enjoyment therefrom; but we can get intense delight from their porcelains, enamels, and lacquer work, in which form is secondary and color the supreme object. The finest specimens of these articles are shut up in the private collections of Europe, and only to be seen by the public on some such rare occasion as the Exposition at Paris of 1865. No one who has not seen what porcelain is in the hands of the ancient Chinese artisan, can form any idea of its exquisite beauty and lightness. Some styles seem as if they were made of an amalgam of precious stones of every hue by a process known only to the gods, and which as far surpass, in varied magnificence of coloring and etherealness of make, the dainty prettiness and misplaced art of Sévres and Dresden as their porcelain is finer than ordinary crockery.

*Oriental porcelains.*

If the best Oriental porcelain be characterized by delicacy and melody, so to speak, of tints, its *cloissonnée* enamels are not less so by a brilliancy and harmony which are actually obtained from rich stones in the shape of an adamantine paste. They constitute a vivid illustration, as to design and coloring, of the fundamental truth of ornament pure, namely, that it should not directly imitate nature or attempt to compete with its forms, but should base itself on a close observation of its methods and forces. We thus get a new and pleasurable sensation out of a novel combination of its elements, without any suggestion of inferiority to nature. Yet, in direct reproduction of its forms, the Japanese bronzists, lacquerists, and draughtsmen render animal and vegetable life with such vital correctness of design and action that the best drawn quadrupeds, birds, and vegetation of European artists appear heavy and spiritless beside them. They have a conscience for ideal color as the Greeks had for ideal form, and this is a sure guide in their several purposes of ornamentation. Hence everything is well done in relation to the desired effect. The grammar of ornament being at their fingers'

ends we are seldom troubled with those violations of harmony unity, fitness, and truth of design, and that confusion of purpose, which are common to European work. I have before me in lacquer-relief on ivory a hawk in silver perched on a golden tree, which, thus mentioned, seems extremely artificial and conventional. But so delicately are the metallic tints gradated, and so perfectly are the forms rendered, that while the effect of the whole as ornament is most rich, there is also more of the actual life of bird, tree, trunk, and leaf suggested than one finds in our best plates of natural history. In painting, sculpture, and architecture proper, neither the Japanese nor Chinese compete with the European, or have anything worthy of note as fine art. But in the minor sphere of decorative art, they excel in the variety and agreeableness of design and splendor of coloring.

*Japanese enamels.*

The finest Japanese enamels have the harmonious delicacy and intricacy of pattern of Venetian lace. Were it not for the solidity of their materials, one might fear they would melt away like a dissolving view. Chinese enamels are more magnificent in general effects; colors are massed more for brilliant contrasts, are broader and more vehement in tone, more architectural in expression, with infinite inventive detail combined into an original structural whole; the entire mass, like those immense globes and vases which were taken from the summer palace at Pekin when it was sacked by the French and English, forming a symphony in color, or firmaments in miniature lined with jasper, lapis-lazuli, amethyst, ruby, sapphire, and all manner of precious stones in a sea of gold.

Scarcely less beautiful, though of the frailest material, are the Japanese straw-mosaics in the form of boxes, which have the quiet, rich sheen of the finest birds of the tropics, the patterns being arranged in geometrical lines, but preserving a resplendent harmony of colors of the liveliest contrasting lines. We call Oriental taste bizarre, but their fancy in design and color is based on a closer insight into nature than Europeans display in their decorative art. It seems equally founded in realism and mysticism, or compounded of them; for while nothing can be more accurate than their observation and comprehension of the forms and instincts of vegetable and animal life, they baptize facts in the waters of an imagination that has no counterpart in the European mind for versatility of invention and strangeness of types, which, although grotesquely monstrous and impossible, look natural in functions and conformation. These super-

nal creations of the diabolism of art are much less common in Europe. Leonardo da Vinci, indeed, succeeded in making a monster of new and hideous mien; but almost every other artist who has attempted it, has only invented impotent caricatures of mystic forces, so palpably impossible in themselves as not to frighten a baby, or seem to be other than the grotesque imagery of a fancy untutored in the facts of nature. But the Japanese is so shrewd an observer of them that he does not find it difficult to construct new forms, invest them with vitality, infuse into them the mysticism of his demon-loving imagination, and force them to do its bidding. To him they are as substantial beings as are, or were Satan, Charon, or the great dragon of the Apocalypse to the Europeans; and being thus real, he makes us feel their presence in whatever material their ugliness is fashioned into, just as we are vitally conscious of the joy in beauty of the best Greek, and the spirit of sacrifice in the best mediæval art. Unfortunately modern commerce has almost extinguished the art of the Orient by reducing it to the prosaic level of cheap manufacture.

*Moresque ornament.*

Moresque or Saracenic ornamentation is the æsthetic reaction of an imaginative race against the religious proscription of their faith to paint or carve forms of animal and human life. It culminated in the Alhambra, which is the most complete example of the intellectual as opposed to sensuous or sensual spirit in architectural decoration. Although it gives a certain satisfaction to the eye and mind, it is a limited one, partaking more of the feeling one experiences in solving a difficult problem and finding it beautiful in theory, than of that enjoyment which comes from less restricted scopes of art. There is no completed pleasure in its complex involutions; instead, a sense of bewilderment, as of a puzzle which provokes to a solution without a suggestion of other repayment than in unravelling the mysteries of graceful lines and meandering designs void of meaning and shape. It is mathematical science playing art rather than art absolute, with whatever fascination of color it chooses to add. Instead of stimulating the imagination to seek satisfaction in the external world, it tends to turn it back on itself for a suggestion of the unseen, and in this respect is admirably adapted to keep pure that abstract idea of God which is the great principle of Mohammedanism.

The Arab put admonitory texts into his ornamentation. The Greek fashioned heroism, human and divine, into color and shape.

Whatever was an example or benefit to men, stimulated his faith, or fed his love of beauty, he found everywhere in sight — on temple, furniture, utensil, and jewelry, pictorial and carved lessons and tales to instruct and amuse him. Even the tiles, spouts, cornices, friezes, and floors of his dwellings had a higher purpose than material use. They were alive with the stories of his beautiful mythology, encouraging his waking hours or inspiring his dreams with examples of good fighting evil, and happiness banishing pain.

Mediævalists and Byzantines filled their ornamentation with virtues conquering demons, face of angel, cherub, seraph, saint, and hero; the saving sacrifice of self instead of the delight in it of the ancient religions; emaciation and untidiness of body in place of the whiteness and roundness of pagan limbs; but always in sight, their doctrine of salvation.

The Renaissance perverted the virtue and beauty of both periods into infidelity and sensuality of symbolism, losing even sensuously whatever was best in them. That which befell its architecture, equally affected its ornament. Not that it was wholly wrong and unlovely when free of the dictation of princes who guided its destinies; for some of its works, whether of classical or mediæval motive, are almost as satisfying as their prototypes.

*Lucca della Robbia ware.*

Lucca della Robbia invented his glaze before the Renaissance had corrupted art. His object was, by giving a vitreous surface to the clay model, to save the expense of cutting it in marble or casting it in bronze. This process was the most successful ever invented to cheapen sculpture, and make it in some respects even more durable, without an obvious loss of its finer properties. In the hands of its inventor, it was of inestimable value to fine art, as it multiplied its objects at small cost, and enabled them to resist the weather in localities which would have proved detrimental to other material, preserving for an indefinite period that clearness of surface and lustrous sharpness of outline which enables the spectator to detect subtle qualities of expression and truth of modelling at a distant point of view. Thus it happens so often in remote or dirty by-ways of Italy, like St. Fiore in the Tuscan Maremma, or the present crowded and filthy market-place of Florence, in the exterior of dilapidated buildings or inside poverty-stricken churches, we meet with compositions of this master that are literally visions of angelic hosts to lift the thoughts out of the

mire of life heavenwards. Costly marbles would never have been placed in such localities or remained intact, had they been. But after nearly or quite four centuries of the vicissitudes of climate and history, they often exist to-day as perfect of surface and as replete with spiritual life as when Lucca threw his pious soul into them, and fixed it there. In his works there is no touch of the levity or sensuality of the Renaissance. The purity of their great "white light," and the thoroughness of the characterization he bestows upon saints, angels, prophets, martyrs, the Virgin, Saviour, and God himself — the plastic clay retaining those subtle touches which are somewhat lost in their transfer to less ductile material — all this makes them reflect in a high degree the ineffable language of religion.

As ornament apart from sculpture proper, his invention admitted of great variety and expansion of design, beside the free use of indestructible color; but the secret died with his family. Since his time repeated but fruitless attempts in various countries have been made to revive the process. The results thus far make us regret all the more our great loss in the disappearance of the receipt for the glaze, which tradition says is concealed in the head of one of Lucca's numerous statues.

*Palissy.*

Somewhat later, Palissy discovered a method of glazing terra-cotta and clay analogous to the Robbian; but it was thin and brittle, and more suited for in-door decoration and cabinet specimens than adapted to the uses of the Italian process. Its artistic aim was simply decorative, but the lively invention and delicate taste of Palissy, especially as displayed in the borders of his dishes and their exquisite coloring, place its best compositions almost in the domain of fine arts. The well-known bizarre Reptile plates, being moulded directly from nature, are an exception to this remark, and are now made in France almost equally as good as his.

*Limoges.*

Limoges enamels in their earlier stage were much like the Byzantine in motives and workmanship, devoted to religious subjects, and of crude design, though brilliant in color. After the Renaissance they became more pagan in sentiment and meretricious in coloring, but with superior drawing and composition. In garish brillancy nothing excels them. There are some in gray *chiaro-scuro* of almost classical elegance. The manufacture is now revived at Paris, but fails, less in accuracy of design than in the beauty of composition and intense glow of color, to rival the old.

Every recent attempt to revive and equal obsolete styles of ornamentation has been a comparative failure. Though to the experienced eye the ceramic ware of Naples, made in imitation of the ancient Grecian and Etruscan, is a success, it really is deficient in those points which constitute the true excellence of their originals, even to the manual finish and fineness of the materials. Ginori's revival of Italian *majolica* at Florence, beautiful as it undoubtedly is, falls short of its patterns made at Gubbio, Urbino, Pesaro, and Faenza in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in the essentials of a strong, clear enamel, depth, fusion, and gradation of tints; in fine of those special mechanical qualities which are the heir-looms of the families that perfect them, and perish with their blood. It seems easier to invent the new than to repeat the old, which has served out its time. Better so! Each phase of civilization has its own defined feelings and purpose, which are best expressed in an art of its own creation. Worn-out faiths, customs, or ideas degenerate into conventionalisms which no patronage can awaken into real life again. Apparently it is easy for science to rediscover old methods, and by rule renew old results; but she does not succeed in her attempts. Analysis can recall a chemical receipt; but the skill which gave it value, comes not back with it. In all the fine ornament of the past there is a subtle something, an imponderable product of brains and fingers, which will not serve new masters. An imitation may appear splendid, and, at a superficial glance, even superior to its model; but a close examination of both soon shows its inferiority. This is especially true of what is called the "*réflet metallique*," or iridescent majolica, of Gubbio, the secret of which was confined to Maestro Giorgio Andreoli and his son, though there were other and less fine applications of the process to merely decorative dishes and vases, introduced into Italy before his time by the Sicilian Arabs.

*Majolica.*

The dukes of Urbino were the principal patrons of these fine qualities of majolica, which were made for royal gifts, and whose designs were the work of the most distinguished artists. Here I ought to remark, as one reason of the artistic superiority of all old decoration over all modern, that the artist and workman was either the same person, or there was no such distinction between them as now obtains. They worked in common for a common end, each comprehending the other's part. Majolica ware was strong enough to be used, as it was made of a coarse, tough earth, thickly glazed; but the object of the finer

sort was merely a novel and effective kind of wall or sideboard decoration, or even out-door ornament. Culture gave this ordinary class its refinement, and made it a companion of princes. With Sévres porcelain it is its pretty dress alone that pleases. The creative minds of the artist and scientist were forever fixed in glowing colors by means of an adamantine enamel on the majolica plate, which nothing could obliterate, and only rude strength destroy.

*Majolica* of the Maestro Giorgio iridescent surface and Xanto or Fontana compositions is one of the most satisfactory kinds of ornament ever invented, because of its broad artistic motives and treatment, and its wonderful use of some of the most lovely effects of nature to heighten its charms. The difficulties attending its make were so many that it is rare to find a specimen in which the glaze is uniformly transparent and lustrous, and the design equally correct throughout. That dazzling white glaze seen in the perfect specimens was obtained from a varnish made from tin, into which the pottery was plunged when half baked. Before it had time to dry, the composition must be drawn and painted, a process all the more difficult because the varnish tended to absorb the color. Those prismatic lustres which make the best plates vie with the sheen of an Impeyan pheasant, or the glitter of an haliotis shell, which glisten and scintillate like gems or winter's stars, or give reflections of ruby and opalescent light to a half-darkened room that keeps within its walls a warm glow as of a perpetual sunset, are mystic preparations of lead, copper, silver, and gold, that no modern experiments have been able to repeat.

*Glass.*

Glass presents a striking contrast between its old and new forms as ornament. In richness and variety of colors, antique glass exceeds the modern; but we see it seldom in perfect condition. The ancients acquired a skill in working it analogous to that shown on gems. Indeed, the principle on which it was worked was purely artistic, except when made for the most ordinary purposes of trade. Our cut, engraved, and colored glass excels in transparency, polish, outline, and lucidity of design, — mere mechanical excellences; and we meet, as in all other ornament, a wearisome repetition of the same patterns and styles, each the exact counterpart of the other, to satisfy the modern desire to have sets of objects. Now the ancient artisan, not being the slave of machinery, and confined to one species of labor or portion of the article, learned all that

was requisite to make it as a whole, using his own taste and discretion in fashioning everything committed to his charge. Consequently, his was emphatically work of the mind; and he could not if he would, and would not if he could, repeat it without number, as our workmen, trained to the monotony of machine-labor, and allowed no exercise of their own inventive faculties, are compelled to. Examine the fantastic glass of the Venetian Republic. So flexible, light, varied, and gleesome are its tinted or lucid forms that it seems like the crystallized laughter of the immortals, — frozen breath which the next warm breath will dissolve into new shapes of air-like matter.

In this connection I might speak of gems, ivories, bronzes, and precious metals, in all of which the ancients excelled the moderns, not excepting Cellini and his school. On account of its perishable nature, we have no means of knowing what amount of beauty the Greeks imparted to iron; but their superiority in bronze attests an equal capacity for working the more common metal. The mediæval and Renaissant artisans wrought it into wondrously beautiful complex and grotesque forms for keys and other domestic objects, besides the splendid inlaid and *repoussé* armor which was a speciality of the age of chivalry, giving to iron almost as much mystic grace and significance as to glass. Even leather was stamped with loveliness. But it is unnecessary to enumerate more articles in proof of the general desire to put the homely and ugly out of sight, and to clothe utility in æsthetic costume, — a desire which succeeded in its aim because all classes comprehended and enjoyed artistic beauty. Public taste was trained from the cradle in this direction. It liked to see the distinctions of rank and office, religious rites, and even trades marked by richness and variety of costumes and ceremonies. There was a constant rivalry in pomp and magnificence as attributes of station and wealth, — a rivalry, not as now of sheer luxury of life, but of its pleasures, strength, and beliefs in the highest symbolisms of art, at a period when its objects were so abundant and excellent that every *gamin* of the street was a sounder critic, and had more joy in them, than now has the average citizen of any people.

Were it possible, I would burn it into the heart of every one whose instincts are not wholly sordid or animal that taste alone gives the capacity to enjoy art, and that that comes only by systematic training. Life is hard and angular, unless it be rounded and refined by æsthetic education. What benefit is it to a blind

man to take him to the Bay of Naples, or place him before the Victoria Regia in blossom? A people who know not beauty, make a mock of those who would bestow it on them, if they do not turn upon and rend them for their pains. The more deformed and senseless an object is, if it only be called ornamental, the more it is popular, and the less anything truly beautiful is esteemed. In America, the present is an epoch of monstrous plaster figures, daubed with crazy paint; of mammoth cast-iron wash-basins, called fountains; of cast-iron architecture and clumsy gate-ways to public parks; of shoddy portrait-statues and inane ideal ones; of ornaments, pictures, and sculpture made to gull and sell; of rude though not unkindly manners and speech; lakes of tobacco-spit, and heels higher than heads where ladies pass; of polluting the balmiest airs of heaven with fumes of filthy pipes; and of the thousand and one sins of omission and commission by the selfish and thoughtless, that make life tenfold less enjoyable than it needs be. Ornament our lives and character consistently, and we refine and elevate our neighbor as well as ourselves. There must, however, be a general diffusion of correct æsthetic principles before the public mind is able to discriminate between right and wrong in art. Wedgewood a century ago invented new and lovely forms of pottery; but, the English not then comprehending their merits, they failed of commercial success. But what was then despised, has now become popular, owing to diffused culture and a practical acquaintance with fine art by means of schools of design and institutions like the Kensington and British museums. Within one generation these have raised the knowledge and skill of the artisans of Great Britain so much, that instead of being dependent on other nations for works of taste, she is now a large exporter of them, to the great benefit of her exchequer.[1] The United States,

[1] It was not until 1851 that the real art-education of England began. It commenced with a reform of ordinary utensils, by showing how that even pots and kettles could be made as comely as solid. The latent desire of beauty existed, but needed an impulse to bring it out, and instruction to turn it to good account. One came with the Exhibition of the art of other nations in the great Glass Palace, and the other with the establishment of national schools of art under the direction of the Committee of Council on Education, aided by museums, and stimulated by prizes for drawing and design. The first parliamentary grant to the schools, seventeen in all, was £6,850, which sufficed for 2,482 students. In 1863, the schools had increased to ninety, the pupils to 16,180, while the subsidy was reduced to £4,005; and the year after, so flourishing had they become that the House of Commons recommended that they should for the future be left to rely on their own resources, which view was adopted by the Privy Council.

although possessing greater natural resources and actually more native capacity, does not produce any objects of artistic value, but contents herself with buying the dregs of those of other nations at an enormous cost, simply because of its indifference to art in general, and inability to distinguish between garish ignorance and actual taste.

This condition is of our own choice. Plainly speaking, we not only prefer the vulgar and debased, but we pay a large premium for it. The sole remedy is in establishing museums and schools of design, making art a branch of general education, and importing from Europe and Asia objects and professors to instruct us. In time we may attain to a taste that shall make us as independent of foreign nations for works of art in general as we are for cereals.

Not that in pursuing this we should neglect those solid material foundations of health and prosperity which legitimately take precedence in the march of civilization, when only one of the two can exist at once. The old Etruscans were wise in this respect. They looked first to good drainage, water, air, and agriculture. Yet they so rapidly accumulated precious objects that Dionysius of Sicily, in a filibustering expedition, plundered one of their sea-side fanes of gifts of the value of twenty million dollars. America is right in looking first to sanitary and economical measures. These accomplished, let us consider our æsthetic wants. Only by so doing shall we establish for ourselves that foremost rank in modern civilization which the vulgar oratory of the land already claims as ours. As yet we are foremost in nothing absolutely great except the opportunity which the best government yet devised gives to freemen. Our future depends on the use we make of that OPPORTUNITY

*Our opportunity.*

# CHAPTER XIV.

## AMATEURSHIP.

THE nascent ambition evinced by Americans to establish galleries of paintings is a favorable symptom, especially as in several instances they are projected as much for the public as individual enjoyment. But be the motives of the originators what they may, this method of developing taste is yearly assuming larger proportions and more definite aim, although as yet confined to modern pictures. For this narrowness of choice there is no remedy until experienced amateurs in all branches of art, as in Europe, have grown up among us, to incite specific tastes and render æsthetic culture, in some degree, indispensable to a general education. Public galleries we are certain to possess in time; and that time is nigh or remote according to the quality and extent of individual connoisseurship. Just now the empirical admirer of fine arts sways the fashion that directs their course. Until dilettanteism is superseded by connoisseurship no collections of permanent interest are likely to be founded. Everywhere, amateurship is the sieve which catches and sifts the wheat from the chaff, investigates the origin and history of objects, establishes their value, preserves and makes them known, and finally secures for them a home in national museums. All the great galleries have been begun either on the basis of private collections, sometimes royal, or formed by the purchase of articles from the collections of connoisseurs in general.

*Dilettanteism.*

The training of eye and mind required to pronounce intelligently on the merits of contemporary painting and sculpture is readily acquired in comparison with the experience requisite to decide about works whose motives and styles have nothing in common with the present. But even these demand a more critical study than the ordinary American amateur finds leisure to bestow on them. Hence the immediate results, as seen in the collections formed, are not as fair a showing of modern art

as will be seen when connoisseurship becomes a serious pursuit, and a public has been educated to comprehend and enjoy the results of æsthetical studies. There are more snares in the path of the dilettante than he dreams of, besides the vulgar falsifications of the works of popular artists, which are periodically foisted on our public as originals by jockeying dealers from Europe. Artists themselves have been known to jockey, buying cheap copies of their favorite pictures, adding a few touches, and selling them as their own work. Art, I am sorry to say, has its tricks of trade. Sometimes a reputation is acquired by the labors of others. Count D'Orsay gained office, money, and distinction as an artist, by employing a clever draughtsman and modeller and an experienced painter, who had been an assistant to Mr. Pickersgill, the English academician. These men were regularly salaried, working in his studio, but kept out of sight of his patrons. The count himself had so confused a notion of flesh-coloring that he was obliged to have "palettes made with the names of the colors painted in their order on their rim,"[1] and his assistants were in despair when called on to rectify his work, while being no less at their wits' end to repair the injuries he did to theirs, which was to be palmed off as his own. Were the critic to go often behind the scenes, he could demonstrate, by other conspicuous instances, how easy it is to delude a public by a fictitious show of talent into bestowing patronage and reputation on an empiric, especially in sculpture, in a land like Italy, where skilful modellers and designers may frequently be hired for less than the wages of a common laborer in America, and where the facilities for plagiarism are so abundant and tempting. Undoubtedly the counterfeit artist in time discloses his own secret. But what we Americans need in general is the capacity, founded on knowledge, of not being taken in by appearances, of comprehending genuine work under any name, of exposing the fictitious, and of appreciating excellence wherever seen.

*Connoisseurship.*

The pathway to this capacity lies in connoisseurship. We accumulate riches in families so rapidly that an intellectual safety-valve becomes an urgent necessity to turn idle talents to use, and prevent their self-destruction. Actually it is a grave social problem to know what to do with the increasing numbers of young men born to great incomes; rather for them to know what to do with themselves after leaving college. None will deny that they ought to use

[1] See *Cornhill Magazine*, June, 1864, "Story of a Spoiled Life."

their means and endowments to benefit society, or at least to improve their own minds. How different the usual practice is, every observer of the gilt-edge youth can discern. One of their number said to me, on my inquiring about his circle of intimates on his return to Europe after a short visit to his native city, "Those who had not the delirium tremens, had committed suicide." Soon after, he poisoned himself; and another I knew, buried his lassitude of life in the turbid Thames. These are floating straws, but they show the set of one of the eddies of American life.

The least intellectual of those who have the misfortune to be born to great riches, are less likely to be the victims of ennui; for they find consolation in field-sports, the turf, and similar employments. Pursuits of a higher interest must be provided for men of a finer mental fibre, after their animal pleasures have been dulled by satiety, if they are to be kept clear of melancholy or self-destruction, which is none the less suicide, whether by bottle or pistol. For them there is a sure resource in fine-art amateurship. There are two sorts of collections: one based on connoisseurship, acute, learned, sincere, stimulated by the enthusiasm for the beautiful, accumulating objects to study their history as well as to gratify taste, and partaking of a degree of happiness such as no other intellectual passion more intensely confers: the other is deeper-rooted in ostentation; the desire to possess what is rare, curious, or in fashion, without regard to its intrinsic merits; a makeshift to kill time or for speculation; a collection no sooner formed than dispersed, either for gain or to begin on something new. Such amateurs are as prone to light on the garbage as the jewels of art. Swayed by caprices, they slight one day what they buy the next at enormous cost, and are quite as ready to hug to their bosoms, in the ecstasy of bearing it off from rivals as foolish as themselves, the halter that hung the last murderer as the finest antique medal of Syracuse.

But a mania for collecting objects of no artistic value is preferable to mania a potu. A series of the most common or ugly things directly or indirectly illustrates a period of history or the progress of national industries. Rich idlers do well, therefore, to become collectors as a corrective to ennui, and to benefit the public. It matters not if, like the Marquis of Hereford, they pay thousands of pounds sterling for a few porcelain vases; like Signor Campana of Rome, spend nearly two millions of dollars

in amassing a vast multitude of classical and mediæval objects with but little sagacity or discrimination; or display the taste and knowledge of a Soltikof and a Blaças in forming, at a moderate expenditure, cabinets of antiquities of inestimable value. Rich idlers, in doing any of these things, cannot fail of pleasurable excitement, and wisely investing their spare capital, if they be sagacious in their acquisitions. Every great collection, when dispersed at auction, has enriched its owners, if judiciously managed, as did that of the late Count Pourtales of Paris, whose miscellaneous gathering of antique bronzes, gems, pottery, sculpture, mediæval works, and old and modern paintings, by no means the finest, brought to the heirs fivefold their original cost. It is safe, therefore, to say that a collection formed by a connoisseur, not a dilettante, is a sound investment of time and money as well as brains.

*The critics of America.*

There is another aspect to amateurship. It is a conservative, refining, expanding, social element, begetting respect for the ideas and labors of other races or times, collating and comparing the particular civilization with the general, and local truth and beauty with universal. The moral and intellectual bearing of it is obvious to any one who sincerely takes it up. But without museums America has no means of forming a class of connoisseurs at home. Neither can she form museums until she can have at command the knowledge as well as the money needed. Every premature attempt will be a failure; the more ridiculous in consequence of the crude notions disseminated by a class of literary guerillas, who, without studying it, assault any topic that offers booty to their purses or feeds their greed of notoriety. These freebooters are of two sorts. Neither spare any reputation or subject that, like the stately ship for the parasitical barnacle, presents a big bottom for them to fasten to. The healthy brain soon cloys on an oversweetened or highly spiced diet of æsthetic cooks. I may cater no better myself. But as a detective, I am bound to apprise the public that sugary platitudes in the common style of most of "our own correspondents," discovering a Phidias or Titian in every American artist abroad, and a Pericles in every patron, are an amiable delusion. Even if it were so, the writers, not having qualified themselves to decide on such matters any more than to sit on the bench of the Supreme Court, could not announce the fact on their own judgments. As a specimen of the sort of critic who traffics in transcendental flights of a less indiscriminating

but more inflammatory character, to the utter bewilderment of simple minds not equal to the "cool, full shock of his style," or comprehending how he "freshens the driest mind" by covering "the gravest and meanest subject with the very foam of human speech," see a popular writer on art and men in the "Galaxy of New York" for January, 1869. 'Pon honor, I quote correctly; not the titbits either, as any one may read in the article, in which the flamboyant writer tells his readers "with what vim and raillery" does the "Corinthian Hurlburt demonstrate Sumner's legs and Tilton's limbs," and how "he whinnies, and caracoles, and prances," etc. By some such adroit catering for our magazine public as is practised by wily concocters of "American drinks" for thirsty customers with sensational palates, certain Bedouins of the pen have established themselves as authorities in matters of art, without giving it other serious thought than to try to "whinny, caracole, and prance" themselves into notoriety on its back.

American taste, however, is indebted to Russell Sturgis, Jr., and Clarence Cook for æsthetic ideas and principles clearly stated and practically applied. They have raised the standard of execution among artists by insisting on their best, and pointing out their shortcomings in the interest of art itself, and to enlighten, not confuse or disgust, buyers and amateurs. These may not accept all their conclusions, but must respect their zeal and the example they set of studying a subject before criticising it.[1] It is another encouraging sight for us that critics of their calibre are at work without being seduced into the common practice of making everything pleasant for everybody at the expense of critical discernment and honesty. So few risks are taken in the interests of any truth that instances in art are doubly welcome.

I strive to exaggerate neither our advantages nor disadvantages, but to present a true view of their situation. Poor criticism, like poor art in its beginning, prepares the way for better. Could it be done, it would be as impolitic to quench it, as to

[1] As an architect, Mr. Sturgis's studies of late have been particularly directed towards plans and designs for public museums and galleries, which he makes a specialty. Aided by counsel from Europe, and the experience recently acquired in the new structures erected for purposes of art in England, Germany, and France, Mr. Sturgis has in hand the means of providing our public with designs for similar edifices, which shall leave us in no whit behind the best abroad in their essential points for the accommodation and exhibition of objects of art.

consign to the lime-kiln all inane sculpture. It would do no good for the public taste to get far ahead of current art and criticism. All must advance together, each interest aiding the other. One means of increasing æsthetic knowledge would be to introduce schools of design into our common-school system, which could be done as readily as has been the introduction of vocal music. The effect on our industrial arts, taking the experience of England in evidence, I have alluded to in Chapter XIII. It is easier to compute the material advantages of such a step than to exhibit the improvement in morals and manners which would accrue from new sources of rational happiness, and the changes that would occur in the general aspect of the land when each citizen not merely acquired a knowledge of the elementary principles of art with other branches of public instruction, but with it the ambition to make his home as much a thing of beauty as it is now of comfort.

Another means of acquiring the knowledge needed to make a sound connoisseur is his mistakes. Nothing hits harder than an exploded folly or delusion. After wasting money on ugliness or falsehood, the true and beautiful become clearer and dearer to us. Even the wily fraud of the dealer may in the end prove a cheap lesson. We may miss the coveted object, but have obtained in its stead that practical knowledge of good and evil which is of more account than the finest art by itself. Life needs instruction in detecting both as one means of its moral and intellectual development. We see one of our ideals, or think we do, and pursue it only to be cheated. What then? We have discovered the full measure of another soul, and something besides of a hitherto undetected weakness of our own to be changed into strength or despair at the option of the will. Thieves, sneaks, and liars do more good than they know.

Apply this principle to amateurship. The best judges of objects of art in general are found not among artists, but those who stake their money and reputations on them as dealers, restorers, or connoisseurs. Most artists limit their instruction to a speciality of their epoch. Seldom do they interest themselves in what does not immediately concern their own studies or aims. As a class they are more indifferent to old art of any kind, and less versed in its history, character, motives, and methods, than amateurs. Andrea del Sarto could buy for Francis I. the best works of the Florentine school, because he was a competent judge of his contemporaries. So might a

Velasquez, Rubens, or Sir Joshua Reynolds for their employer or themselves; for they knew by practical studies their highest tests of consummate art, besides having that faculty of constitutional recognition of genius which one great mind has for another. Holman Hunt, Millais, Gérome, Leys, and any artist of their critical acumen, would decide better on the technical merits of other masters than an amateur. But as America has not as yet artists of similar training, no competent committee could be formed of them, to meet the requirements of a public gallery, although certain ones, who have a liking for specific schools or individual old masters, might make useful suggestions in relation to their favorites. Artists of all ages, with rare exceptions, have been noted for predilections, prejudices, rivalries, and a narrowness of view regarding art as an entirety that largely disqualifies them to judge candidly and wisely of works foreign to their special tastes or methods. I state this historical fact because it is frequently asserted that none but artists are competent for the office in question. Having had a varied experience with amateurs, dealers, and artists of several nations, I draw on it, as well as current history, for hints of practical value.

The late Director of the British National Gallery, Sir Charles Eastlake, although an accomplished artist himself, and an eminent art scholar, seldom bought pictures for the public on his own responsibility, preferring to repose his judgment on the critical eye of Otto Mündler, whose knowledge was gained in large measure as a dealer. Count Nieuwerkerke relies on the authority of M. Reisét and of F. Villot, amateurs of distinction; he, as likewise his predecessor, D'Orsay, owing his position of Chief Director of the Imperial Museums of France to the friendship of the emperor, without reference to any special qualifications for the post. The director of one important gallery, otherwise a gentleman of culture, acknowledges his unacquaintance with all pictures, not being able to discriminate between even eminent artists of the same schools. A cursory acquaintance with the management of European galleries serves to show that artists have small part in it. Indeed, the practical administration is confided to amateurs or scholars, like the above named, and to Waägen, Cavalacaselle, Forster, Passavant, Morris Moore, Layard, and similar students, while the nominal chiefs are not unfrequently ornamental names, indebted to anything else than their knowledge for their enviable distinctions.

A foreign gallery is by no means the infallible authority which its reputation would imply. Many of them were begun by princes who bought pictures on the recommendation of interested parties, or acquired them for ostentation, caprice, or as a sort of alms-giving to needy artists, as is often done now, without regard to the merit of the works themselves. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, several sovereigns were distinguished for connoisseurship. Lorenzo de Medici, Francis I., Charles V., and some of the popes took to amateurship seriously. As great artists then abounded, it was easier to acquire first-class works than it has been since, and with less risk of deception, though there are instances on record of Renaissant statuary being palmed off on princely buyers for classical. But there could be no mistake in regard to paintings the execution of which were watched by the sovereigns themselves. The few thus done, or specially ordered by religious corporations, now constitute the masterpieces of modern galleries. But there were also obtained with them scores of inferior or worthless works, which it would be well to discard. Dresden, Madrid, Pitti, Uffizi, the Louvre, and other royal galleries were thus initiated; consequently they are better exponents of the individual tastes that originated them than of an erudite system of collecting works in reference to their historical sequence, motives, and æsthetic functions. The later formed collections of Berlin, Munich, and London have more of this scientific, catholic spirit; an example which has forced their predecessors to begin to conform to the true requirements of national museums, both in acquisitions and arrangement. But it would be superhuman virtue if the management of any great gallery could be kept free of the jobbery that seems inseparable from every institution in which the public have an interest.

An English peer once told me how two votes in Parliament were gained to the ministry by the purchase of two inferior pictures, at the owners' valuation, and no questions asked. It would be entertaining and instructive to expose the weak points of the chief galleries of Europe with a view to reform and reorganization: to point out how that the wholesale plunder by Napoleon I. of the works of art was not the greatest evil which befell them; for French restorers were permitted to torture their best life out of many of the finest pictures subsequently restored to their legitimate owners, — a fact which may account for the disappointment at first view to many on seeing some of the

world's masterpieces: and further to explain by what confusion of ideas in regard to his own and the property of the state, Napoleon III. permitted some of the best pictures of the Louvre to be taken from it to adorn the private residences of his particular friends, following the example of the empress, in placing in her nursery the finest Murillo in the gallery: further, to show how such a master has been repainted out of all look of the original; how this one has no trace of the artist's brush left in sight on it; why such an inane picture or ruined example of a great name got in, and how such a distinguished one got out; why under one Direction a picture gets one baptism only to be rebaptized under another; how it is that attributions acknowledged to be wrong are kept; how few pictures have authentic genealogies; the means by which the occasional libels on great masters are intruded; the forgeries, jockeyism, and flunkeyism a great gallery draws in its train; the secret reasons why large prices are sometimes paid for indifferent specimens of an artist when superior ones can be had for much less; the chicanery by which the sum paid by the government for an object is made so much in excess of what the owner would be glad to receive were it not for intermediate agencies; in fine, to unmask the pretensions and empirical management of art in high places, of which the general public can know nothing. Criticism is, however, slowly but surely doing a good work in all these points. The public applauds the Direction of the Louvre in paying upwards of one hundred thousand francs for a small portrait by Antonella da Messina because it is a masterpiece of a rare artist in fine condition, but it scorns the jugglery which baptizes the new "St. John in the Desert" of the Long Gallery by the name of Raphael; it deplores that many of the old masters, notably the fine Perugino bought of the King of Holland in 1850, should be left so wretchedly repainted in the bad method recently in vogue, and which has ruined the aspect of thousands of excellent paintings throughout Europe, simply to give jobs to favored restorers, who either wholly obliterate or obscure the works confided to them, and often make pictures of different artists and times all seem as if painted by one hand; the public very justly condemns this, and rejoices to perceive that now there is a move in the right direction, by removing some of the uncalled-for repaintings, and restoring them to their genuine though injured condition.

*Restorations.*

There are three modes of restoring pictures. First, the only sensible one of such local repairs as are

necessary to confine it to its original canvas or panel, or to transfer it bodily to a new one, leaving the age of the picture to speak for itself, and every drag of the artist's brush intact. No old picture can be as absolutely sound as when it left its parent easel; but with ordinary precaution, it will continue for many centuries to fairly represent its maker. This is all we should expect, and what we ought to have. Secondly, the foolish mode of wholly repainting the original surface in various ways, the worst of which is by stippling, to the utter loss of those conditions of the painting which were a guarantee of its authenticity, and replacing them by the rarely better and almost invariably worse treatment of another hand. I am the less inclined to quarrel with this exploded method of restoration, inasmuch as when the original surface has not been subjected to overmuch abrasion under the plea of cleaning, it has been the means of preserving numberless fine works, which can be made to shine in almost pristine splendor by simply removing with care — better by the knife than by liquids, though each picture, like a patient, requires its special treatment — the superimposed coloring. Italian restorers endeavored to retain the original aspect of their work; but the French method changed it entirely, making it pretty and modern, or bungling it so as to make it seem neither ancient nor recent. I refer to Italian pictures. In the restoration of Flemish and German paintings, they were more skilful, while Italian restorers are quite ignorant.

Thirdly, there exists the dishonest method of restoration, done with the sole intent of deception. The original picture in this instance is either of no merit, or it has been entirely ruined, with but few touches or a bare outline remaining. In the former event, the intention is to make the work of an inferior hand, or an old copy, appear to be a veritable original of a great master, and, in the latter, to pass off the wreck of a fine picture for a perfect, intact one. Either case is as much a fraud as the issuing of false notes. It does not behoove me here to expose the various processes by which these forgeries are effected, but I simply state the fact; also that they are numerous, and that there are few galleries or amateurs but have been gulled by them.

The superiority of the "old master" which is left to speak for itself, even if, as in the instance of the "Mona Lisa," the surface is greatly abraded, and shadows darkened, depriving as they do this powerful portrait of its highest excellence, is still

evident when contrasted with the flatness, inharmony, weakness, and general poverty of aspect which characterize those pictures, like the Perugino already cited and Raphael's "St. Margaret," which have been treated by foolish restorers, or those more solicitous to make up a large bill for unnecessary work than to respect the rights of better men.

I cite these few examples to illustrate my personal remarks on the actual condition of European galleries. If America were ready to profit by the experience of the Old World, the topic could be enlarged upon. Meantime it is sufficient to state that neither foreign museums nor their administration are infallible. There is enough, however, to which no exception can be taken, to guide and instruct the amateur; only, if he would get at the unadorned truth, he must occasionally go behind the scenes. Public galleries have not yet absorbed all of the old masters. There still exist, in the collections of amateurs and in families, paintings which compare favorably with the best in the museums. Prince Napoleon owns the loveliest fresco head of the Virgin, intact, by Luini, now in existence; a head which for beauty and sentiment in its way may be put in comparison with those qualities in the "Muse of Cortona" described in Chapter II. As fine an example as any of the early manner of Raphael remains in the possession of the Connestabile family of Perugia, for whom it was painted, while the "Apollo and Marsyas," owned by Morris Moore, is unexcelled as a specimen of his best manner, inspired by one of the beautiful classical motives, for which he had a special predilection. Upwards of sixteen of his recorded easel productions are yet missing, as are several Leonardos and one Michael Angelo, the celebrated "Leda." Some of these may come to light at any moment. Important, characteristic compositions of the latter two, intact, are also in private hands in Europe. America can found a national gallery to compare favorably with the best European, if she resolutely sets about doing it; one which shall leave no serious vacancy, unless it be of the last mentioned master. Some of the great artists would be represented by their smaller easel pictures; but even these could be such as would fairly present their technical qualities and average merits. It is true that the cost of objects of art of the first class augments yearly, but so does the price of everything else of absolute value. There is, however, no call to follow the example of many European galleries, in accumulating scores of the pic-

tures of the same artist. Enough to show the general scope and style of the chiefs of each school, are all that is required. Repetitions are to be avoided, because they fatigue the eye, dissipate the attention, and drain resources that had better be reserved for what is wanting to make a gallery a complete exposition of art universally. Unartistic and common work of any period, unless it has an archaic or historical value, should be excluded. Nor is it advisable to follow far the decadence of any branch; for all that comes after its climax is passed, is certain to go from bad to worse in rapid sequence. In general, art in its decadence is as loose in its principles as vulgar and faulty in execution. Consequently, both the taste and morals of a community are safer, if spared any unnecessary parading before them of false and degraded styles.

*Galleries.*

Few persons have any conception of the crowd of visitors a gallery attracts. A conjecture of the number that visit the Louvre and Versailles museums, may be hazarded from the fact that more than three hundred thousand francs are received annually from the sale of catalogues which are probably not bought by one visitor in twenty. Before canes and umbrellas were admitted with their owners, one hundred thousand francs were taken in one year from their deposit at the doors. At the current fee of two sous each, this sum would represent one million persons who brought these articles with them. Undoubtedly there were very many more who did not thus encumber themselves. It is notorious that the inhabitants of any city are less disposed to enjoy their own sights than those who are obliged to journey to see them. Hence it is reasonable to compute that the one million Parisians do not furnish one tenth part of the frequenters of their galleries. The statistics of the British museums give corresponding results. They exhibit indirectly the pecuniary advantages conferred on those communities which possess artistic attractions of sufficient interest to draw to them vast concourses of sight-seers, independent of the instruction and enjoyment they proffer to the inhabitants themselves. Indeed, not a few towns in Europe may be said almost to live on their old art, which really, especially in Italy, constitutes for the whole country a productive capital of untold value, supporting a large number of people. As is natural in America, we think more of establishing railroads and other channels of commerce. But were one of our towns to own a great museum, visitors would flock

thither from all parts of the Union in such numbers as would soon repay its outlay, and leave it, as it were, a free gift to posterity, with a prolific income for the benefit of the citizens at large. The pecuniary gain would be none the less because chiefly flowing in from indirect sources. Providence so regulates cause and effect, that the best things morally, intellectually, and æsthetically, are certain of the best consequences, in not merely these respects, but ultimately in material well-being. To use an expressive Americanism, Central Parks "*pay*." So do national museums, as that city will discover which is the first to found one on a Central Park scale of organization and administration.

*Æsthetic bottom of Americans.*

I sometimes think that there is more æsthetic bottom to the half-fledged American people than to any of the older races at this moment. It has often happened to me to witness the impressions received from works of art by amateurs of different nations, and their constitutional varieties of temperament as regards them. The average Englishman — I speak of the cultivated amateur — is an intellectual lover of art in relation to its historical antecedents rather than its æsthetic aspects. He appreciates the relative power of names, styles, and characterization in a serious way, without exuberance of feeling; judges cautiously, but dogmatically, and on the whole fairly, though apt to let his strong likings take the transient impress of a fashion for this or that object or artist. A Frenchman gets animated, analyzes keenly technical points, compares quickly, criticises decisively and incisively, generally from the material aspect of art, though prone to discover and enjoy the *spirituel* element. His delight is positive and detective; somewhat narrow in its spiritual apprehension, but intense in its peculiar direction. Germans manifest more genealogical and historical acumen, perceiving details, and drawing inferences overlooked by others, and are prone to speculate thereon. Theirs is a sound, hearty, and learned enjoyment; slightly "dry-as-dust," but instructive. The Russian is more of a cosmopolitan amateur, with no very decided preferences, but disposed to enjoy everything after its kind, without tormenting himself with carping criticism or superfluous investigation. If he be less informed than the other nationalities, he has a compensation in a quick eye and active sensibilities. An Italian amateur is chiefly made up of the traditions of his past; has but slight knowledge or interest in the present; rejoices in the reflected glory of the old masters;

is local and isolated in taste and judgment, but æsthetic in feeling, and sensitive to impressions; less disposed to critical analysis and independent judgment than the Frenchman, but more appreciative of the whole. He accepts a reputation as it has descended to him, understands the good points of his special school, and retains something of the old disturbing jealousy which magnifies one's own city at the expense of a rival's.

This sketch is superficial, but has recognizable fact for a foundation. In remarking that the American amateur may have more æsthetic bottom than the European, I do not imply that he is his equal in culture, but that his incipient taste has a freer range; that he has a nice detective instinct, is quick at apprehending and applying, has no prejudices of national training to uproot, — his drawbacks to a catholic comprehension of art being more negative than positive, — that he inclines to the true and beautiful, enjoying both just as fast as he has an opportunity to get acquainted with them; that he is either extremely reticent or enthusiastic in his preference; and, finally, that as to form the American type of man all civilizations are fused into one new being, so the coming American amateur bids fair to be more susceptible to æsthetic influences than any other. With this large susceptibility, there is dawning an equal ambition, crude and unformed now, but only lacking the knowledge which comes from culture and experience, to do away from America the reproach now cast on it by learned Europeans, of being a great nation destitute of any art.

My purpose in this chapter would be but partially fulfilled, were I not to give such of my own experience in amateurship as may prove of use to those of similar inclinations. As has been already said, the deceptions practised on amateurs, and the risks they run of being cheated, are one of the surest, if not the most agreeable means of acquiring the needful knowledge. Presuming equal caution and good sense, there are no more risks attending the buying works of arts than other objects. So far as my own experience goes, I have been more successful in receiving an equivalent for my money in them than in the usual channels of business. I have met with quite as much honesty and liberality at the hands of dealers in pictures and curiosities as any other class of traders. It is the more incumbent on me to state this, that the only important exception I have to narrate may not be taken as the rule of the class of merchants with whom the amateur is brought into close relations.

I was born a collector. As soon as promoted to the dignity of pockets, I collected shells, then minerals, coins, Indian relics, rare books, and whatever America in my boyhood had to offer that was strange and interesting to one of my means and opportunities. Besides the wholesome physical occupation given by these pursuits, there is much and varied instruction to be gotten, which becomes a prolific source of intellectual enjoyment in riper years. The genuine collector has in him a force of enthusiasm that sometimes makes a fool of him, but in the end carries him triumphant through many a strait, giving to his labors a pleasurable zest such as can be appreciated only by those who have partaken of it. Looking back now in the decline of life, with a judgment sobered down to the standard of advice once given me by a veteran dealer of Rome, "Never to buy a picture with a hot head," I almost covet the return of the delicious thrills of earlier times, when my desire to possess was more urgent than prudence, and my imagination more active than reason. A born collector can no more avoid taking impromptu risks and committing extravagances than the gosling fail to take to swimming. Yet in an experience of more than thirty years, though sometimes mistaken in an attribution, or in the actual condition of an article, I have but once paid dearly for a lesson. This was in part due to the confidence bred in me by the fairness with which I had been treated by picture-dealers in general, especially Italians, and partly to my desire to make my collection of early Italian paintings more worthy of the public position which its friends desired for it, as the basis of an American gallery, showing the chronological and historical sequence of Italian art from its revival in the thirteenth century to its decadence in the seventeenth. That competent student and critic, Russell Sturgis, Jr., says, "It would be very difficult now, and it will not be less at any future time, to form another collection of an hundred and twenty pictures which should at all approach this one in value, etc." [1] — fortifying his own judgment by eminent European authorities.

[1] "Introductory Essay" to *Manual of the Jarves Collection of Early Italian Pictures deposited in the Galleries of the Yale School of Fine Arts.* New Haven: Published by Yale College, 1868. Also the *New-Englander* for January, 1848. Extract from a letter to the authorities of the College from Charles E. Norton of Cambridge: "It is several years since I saw this collection, and I have no doubt that its value and importance have been much increased by the additions which Mr. Jarves has made to it; but even as I knew it, it was a collection of

Every genuine first-class work added to a collection enhances the interest and value of the whole. Hence one is tempted to pay more largely for such an acquisition than if it were to stand by itself, especially if it fills an important gap in the series. I state this to account for my endeavor to have my collection still more satisfactorily represent the schools and masters whose epoch it covers, and also why I hazarded a sum of money on a single picture which I never should have ventured solely for personal gratification. My zeal at this juncture had been stimulated by the apparently fair prospect of speedily seeing established a free gallery of art on a large scale in my native town, — Boston.

So much for my openness to being swindled. This is how it was done. There was in Paris a picture-dealer whose position and clientage to a stranger as naturally inspired confidence as those of any eminent banker. Inquiring of him in 1865 if he had any genuine first-class Italian pictures, I was shown, among others, three which pleased me; a Giorgione, Luini, and a Leonardo da Vinci, the latter represented to be the missing "Saint Catherine" described in Rigollot's "Catalogue of the Works of Leonardo," and also in Lépicié's "Catalogue Raisonné des Tableaux du Roi Louis XV., A. D. 1752," with whose description it agreed. He says, "*St. Catherine est représenté avec une limbe autour de la tête; elle est couronnée de jasmin; de la main droite elle tient un livre ouvret; et de la gauche elle paroit tournée un feuillot. Un des deux anges qui sont auprès de la sainte tient un palm et l'autre l'instrument de martyr.*" [1]

Without wearying the reader with the subtle statements by which I was induced to believe that the picture was that described by Lépicié, I will merely say that I finally bought it and the two others, on the assurance of their authenticity and sound condition, of Woolsey Moreau, their owner. Soon after, discovering that the "St. Catherine" was a falsification, I brought a suit for the restitution of my money, the purchase having been made for the round sum of 90,000 francs. Although the

the highest value in this country, as illustrating by well chosen examples the historical development and progress of Italian art. There are few collections in Europe, if we exclude the galleries in the great capitals, which surpass it in this important respect, and very few in which the proportion of valuable and interesting pictures is as great, as compared with the whole number. Such a collection would make a truly magnificent foundation for a gallery, and the institution that would acquire it, would have an easy preëminence over all other schools of art in America."

[1] Vol. i. p. 11.

other two pictures were genuine, they made a part of the contract, counting in the apprisal at considerably less than half the price asked for the Leonardo, which was the chief inducement. The evidence on which I based my claim was derived from eminent Italian and French experts, including artist-restorers like Ugobaldi of Florence, Hossin Déon, restorer of the pictures of the "Musées Nationaux," Roehn, Gérome, Baudry, and other distinguished painters, all of whom concurred in testifying to the falsity of its attribution. But the chief proof of deception rested on the declaration of the artist-restorer, M. Cordeil, who testified that M. Moreau had placed this picture in his hands about three years and a half previous, after it had been transferred from an old panel to a new one, and enlarged several inches at the sides and bottom. The figures, without being modern, are not of the epoch of Leonardo, but were subjected to the modifications in measurements and design which were requisite to make the picture seem to be the lost one in question, giving in detail the exact nature of the alterations made, and the technical treatment the picture underwent by the instruction of M. Moreau, to enable him to give to it the false attribution by which it was finally sold. It also was shown that the picture was bought in 1861 at the Hôtel Druot for twelve hundred and seven francs, which could not have been done had it been the genuine work of Leonardo, of the value of fifty thousand francs, the price asked by Moreau.

The trial before the Cour Impérial might have been even a more complete exposure of the methods of changing ancient copies or the works of inferior men into old masters of repute, if the court had permitted the witnesses to be cross-examined before them, instead of simply receiving their written declarations, and, still better, of subjecting the painting itself to the proof which would have rendered all such testimony unnecessary. My counsel demanded that either the picture should be tested in the presence of the court, or that a commission of artist-restorers should be officially appointed to report its precise condition, agreeing on my part that if the picture proved to be genuine, I would submit to the detriment and loss occasioned by the process; while its falsity would be incontestable as soon as the repaintings and changes done by the command of M. Moreau were taken off, and the original condition of the picture as described by M. Cordeil revealed. This was refused, and the decision given against my appeal, on the ground that I

had experience in buying old masters, and M. Moreau had given every means he possessed for the identification of the painting.[1] On his part M. Rémond gave an opinion that the picture had been subjected only to legitimate restorations, while the character of the original design and modelling was so "irreproachable," it was impossible for M. Cordeil to have made the alterations he had testified to; in fine, he had never touched the picture at all. As the judgment of the court, without absolutely declaring the authenticity of the painting implied it, I soon after received a proposition to the following effect: "You have been '*volé*,' every one knows, but the court indirectly guarantees immunity to the seller. Naturally you want to get your money back. Put the picture into our hands to be disposed of, and you shall receive, when sold, a sum that will at least partially reimburse you for the swindle."

So far as the decision of the court confirmed the legality of the sale by M. Moreau and denied to me the absolute means of proving the falsification of the picture by unveiling it before the tribunal, perhaps I had acquired the same legal right of selling it as a Leonardo that he had had. Instead, however, I subjected it at the hands of a competent person who was unacquainted with its history, to the same chemical process by which I had begged the court to test its genuineness. By my directions and in my presence, he removed from one half of the picture the repaintings to which it had been subjected by M. Moreau, leaving the remaining portion in the condition in which it had been sold. The result confirmed in every particular the testimony of M. Cordeil. Apparently it was a greatly damaged old copy,[2] not of a Leonardo, but of the "St. Catherine" by Luini once at Nuremberg. The composition had been enlarged from sixty-six centimetres in height and fifty-seven wide, to eighty-two by sixty-six centimetres; the new portion being entirely the work of the restorer, while the contour of the figures and other details had been varied to fit them more precisely to the character of the composition in question, as known by engravings and description, with such variations in small points as might suggest Leonardo's hand, as well as the obscurations of time and the hard, cracked, enamel-like surface, which the old masters show, even beneath repairs and varnishes. There were three

[1] See *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 29th and 30th April, 1867, Paris, for the official report.

[2] Some good judges say an original, by Luini.

distinct repaintings, one in tempera, one in oil, and the other in the technical method called, by the Italians, "*restauro a vernice.*" A few days after the decision, a M. Detrimont, picture-merchant, who had sold for three thousand five hundred francs to M. Verdier, a Frenchman, an original sketch of an unfinished work attributed to Eugene Delacroix, bought for four hundred and eighty francs, and subsequently converted into an apparently complete work of that master, was condemned to refund the price paid, and pay fifteen hundred francs damages. The argument was that it was high time to give a severe lesson to the falsifiers of objects of art, "*qui se rencontrent partout.*" "*Il ne faut pas qu' à Paris on puisse vendre impunément de faux tableaux.*"[1] The severity of the court against M. Detrimont, in view of the fact that he established the authenticity of the sketch, and pleaded that the changes were simply retouches of which the buyer was made cognizant, is the more remarkable, coming so soon after the "Cour Impérial" had made it lawful for a dealer to give any attribution he pleased to a repainted picture, which the most eminent experts pronounced to be not by the master by whose name it was sold. I could cite from the records of the French tribunals a number of instances similar to that of M. Bossel de Mouville in 1858, who was deceived into purchasing some false enamels and dishes of Palissy ware, which prove their strictness in punishing fraud whenever a Frenchman is the victim. The seller in this case was condemned to fifteen months' imprisonment and a heavy fine. A curiosity-dealer, named Barre, sold to M. Dauble for six thousand francs a Louis XVI. chest of drawers stated to have belonged to Marie Antoinette. The purchaser, finding it was repaired in various places, and parts were quite new, brought a suit to recover his money. The defence was that the authenticity of it had not been guaranteed, and that it actually was an article called by the trade a Louis XVI. chest of drawers. But Barre was condemned to refund the money and interest. The late Baron James Rothschild, an amateur of infinitely more experience than myself, had had no difficulty in obtaining restitution when he was cheated into buying false candlesticks, and having the fradulent seller punished.

Facts like these misled me into believing that the same principle of justice, based upon the Article 1353 of the Code Napoleon, which permits the intention of fraud to rest upon

[1] *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 3 Mai 1867, Paris.

"*présomptions graves, precises et concordantes*," to quote from the decision of the Civil Tribunal of the Seine, would be impartially applied to every one without distinction. But before my case was adjudicated, I had been indirectly advised, from high authority, that my appeal was hopeless. Had the decision been against Moreau, it would have shaken rudely the value and prestige of many pictures which had passed from his secret studio into distinguished collections. There would have been a full disclosure of how they were manufactured by clever artists liberally provided with means for amusing themselves, besides their regular salaries, and kept carefully out of the observation of buyers; and this would have been, as was argued, greatly to the detriment of what rogues call a lawful commerce. No dealer, however unscrupulous, sells only false works. To make these salable, he must obtain a reputation for genuineness. The same merchant can, therefore, sell true or false objects, or mingle them, according to the degree of confidence or ignorance of his client. Probably no other American amateur would be gulled as I was. But if disposed to purchase in Paris, he is welcome to profit by my experience in learning how that "*caveat emptor*" is the principle applied by the courts to the foreigner, and "*caveat actor*" to the native.

I should not, however, have said so much of myself in this matter, were it not that the result of the suit, based on the official decision, which ignored the proof of the falsity of the Leonardo, and even gave to it the air of genuineness, had been widely circulated by the European and American press, occasioning many questions to me from various parties, which are now answered. The picture I keep as a proof of the injustice of a judgment compelling me to pay for a forgery the price of a genuine work, to show how these forgeries are executed, and as a monitor should another costly hallucination threaten. Few amateurs go free of similar experiences. Although an artist of repute, Sir Charles Eastlake was egregiously taken in more than once in buying for the National Gallery, while neglecting to secure genuine pictures of real importance for less sums than were paid for spurious or ruined.[1] The authorities of the Louvre bought a forged bust of Benivieni for one of the school of Donatello. Frequent instances might be cited of mistakes made by those whose official positions and long experience should be a guarantee against imposi-

[1] See *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, London, 1855.

tions. They serve to show that there is a fallible side to the best informed. The real point of interest to the public is that the mistakes should not be so covered up as to mislead the student, and a false or worthless object exhibited as a real one to save wounded reputations or regain wasted money.

Besides those who collect for speculative purposes or ostentation, there are two classes of amateurs proper. The number of the first is legion, embracing royal and noble families, and persons of all ranks and professions, down to the seedy vagabonds of the streets, who hawk dirty works of art as the needy Jew does old clothes. A multitude of individuals in Europe increase their incomes, or gain their livelihood one way with another by this traffic, which is approved by many who would scorn a regular business. Even the legitimate amateur is often drawn into it, by buying at times more than he desires to keep, in order to secure a coveted article, or replace an inferior by a superior one, whether he collects only in reference to beauty and rarity, or by system to illustrate a period or school, confining himself to a special purpose rather historical than æsthetic. It is less the money than sound judgment and perseverance that secures a valuable collection of either sort. One of the finest museums of mediæval arts was got together by M. Sauvageot out of a slender salary as a violinist to a theatre in Paris, and by him bequeathed to the nation. The Marquis of Hereford's various acquisitions are an example of what lavish expenditure can command on the whim of the moment. In my case, I had to spend only what was gained by my own exertions, or saved by economies in other directions. The chief value of the old masters I got together, consists not so much in a few masterpieces of great cost, as in a series of characteristic specimens of the leading Italian painters, illustrating the motives, progress, and styles of the various schools, and affording as yet the only opportunity in America of their comparison and study. There are, however, a number of special importance and rarity, worthy of any foreign gallery, and which have been either engraved or noticed in standard works on art. I may be permitted here to name a few on the authority of well known names, not to forestall the judgment of connoisseurs, for the highest evidence of the value of any object of art must be found in itself, but to show to the general reader that I have neither collected nor spoken at random. Further, as the appreciation of such studies for the present must be almost en-

tirely European, I am warranted in giving to the American spectator some testimony, beside my own, that my effort to begin a gallery for my native country has borne genuine fruit, as regards the pictures themselves, whether the final object of a public museum based on it in one of the chief cities of our Union be attained or not. The highest satisfaction of all, that of making as it might be the personal acquaintance of so many distinguished artists of the past, entering into their lives so as to feel them bodily present as friends with whom I hold rich converse, believing I may continue in another life the intercourse begun here, reckoning intervening centuries as naught, — this supreme satisfaction which has cheered and sustained me through many vicissitudes, cannot be imparted to another. If I had not had this spiritual communion with generations gone, through the medium of what they have left behind visible to our senses, it would have been impossible to have written this book. Whatever reception it may meet from those whose eyes are still unopened to the profounder aspects of art, my own treasure of association and experience must remain undiminished. The American amateur of fine art has no audience at home. He must fortify his spirit against the common prejudice, which views his occupation as a frivolous pursuit, if not worse, and against the special ignorance and indifference sometimes of his warmest friends, who will bluntly call his superb Maestro Giorgio an old pudding-dish, or his beautiful Sano di Pietro a Chinese daub. It requires intellectual pluck to be a collector in America of unknown things. But when appreciation does come, it is heartfelt, and sincerely expressed. Both ignorance and sympathy here are honest. Gladly would I have offered in these pages, and in my collection, entire loaves of art. Failing in power to do this, some of the crumbs which I have picked up from the tables of the masters with whom for many years I have broken bread, may be acceptable to a few. But they must accept them as mere *crumbs*.

By a sort of compensation for my ill-fortune in Paris, already narrated, I did obtain a picture which proved to be a genuine Leonardo, in excellent condition, representing the "Madonna and Child," with a background, on one side, of the Castle of Ferrara, and on the other one of the Lombardy lakes, presenting, in exquisitely finished but largely conceived details, the force of *chiaro-scuro*, power of modelling, theory of light

and coloring, and intense characterization which are the chief attributes of this rare master. On seeing it, A. F. Rio, author of the "Poetry of Christian Art," wrote to me, "I have not the least hesitation in declaring that I fully believe it to be the work of that master. I cannot help envying your good luck in making such a valuable acquisition. The genuine pictures of Leonardo are so rare that the want of one has left to this day a sore gap in the gallery of many a sovereign."

Baron Hector Garriod, eminent Italian authority, concludes a long letter covering the technical argument as to its authenticity, as follows: "The tone also of your painting — '*un brun ardoise*' — is that peculiar hue of Leonardo's — his '*œil de couleur*' — which connects itself particularly with the chemical and scientific processes of that great man. The tone of his imitators is quite different. With Luini it is golden, violet with Solaris, brilliant and Raphael-like with Cesare da Sesto, reddish with Mario D'Oggione and Beltraffio, and too free and *caracterisé* with Giovanoni or Sodoma, to be confounded with his. I dare predict for you a signal success in the arena, which your painting deserves to enter, and to dispute with a very small number of concurrents, the coveted honors of so elevated a rank."

The late Professor Migliarini, Director of the Uffizi Gallery, himself an artist and critical connoisseur of European reputation, after a severe examination of the picture left in his hands, writes a lengthy artistic criticism, showing its originality, of which it is only necessary to give a short extract. "I will not enumerate the many different artists of whom you have obtained beautiful specimens, such as Cimabue, the Giotteschi, Pollajuolo, Ghirlandajo, and many others, but confine myself to that *gem* of Leonardo da Vinci, which it seems to me incredible that you should have been able to fall in with and possess," etc.

But the most familiar authority to Americans, as well as graphic description, comes from the pen of Holman Hunt, whose letter, dated Florence, November 21, 1868, is as follows: —

"My Dear Sir,—

"For the last two weeks, I have had my hands so full of work, that I have been unable to write to you about your two pictures, the Luini and the Leonardo da Vinci, which pleased me so much when you were last kind enough to let me see your pictures. The first-named, with the exception of some parts of the face of the infant Saviour, seems to me to be in a very per

fect condition, and to be a very excellent example of the combination of qualities of great simplicity, and almost heroic dignity of beauty, with a richness of painting and color which together are found only in the works of the Lombard school after Leonardo's time. The Roman and Florentine schools are both wanting in lusciousness of texture and tint — while the Venetian school is certainly inferior in ideality of form. I say this, not by way of finding fault with either, but only to illustrate what I mean in saying that the Milanese combined both: to be more exact, I might particularize and add my conviction that, while in design and beauty the Milanese were not inferior in any degree to the Roman school, in painting, although superior to all other provinces, they were not equal to the Venetians. Yet in looking at their works, one has no feeling of there being something wanting in this respect, as is certainly the case when I am looking on even the best Raphael or Michael Angelo. Your Luini, considering the great difficulty of getting any gallery picture of his, is to me a very beautiful and satisfactory example of this Milanese compound excellence. I see no reason whatever to doubt its genuineness. The head of the Virgin is full of beauty, and the management and painting of the background would honor any reputation.

"The Leonardo was painted by the man who made the school, but who had no leisure to study the beauty that might come in sweetness of touch, in mellowness of tint, in reflected lights, and richness of color. He was, as it were, staring into black vacancy with the determination to conjure up a solid dream of beauty of form as his single thought; his color, as his light and shade, served principally to distinguish — to make more tangible his conception. However, even while he had the whole anxiety of making his changing visions into permanent pictures, and thus, bit by bit, developing the grand Italian style of invention, he was equal as a colorist and chiaro-scurist to Raphael — and, therefore, to any other Roman painter, and superior in modelling. Your little picture quite satisfies me as a small example of work. I am a bad bargainer in saying all this, and then asking you, if circumstances should leave you free to sell it, to let me have the first offer of the Leonardo, but an artist must say what he feels about a picture, whether it be to his own loss or not — and certainly I would not appear to put any check upon myself, in treating with you in such a matter.

"Should you be able to sell, and I be able to buy, you may

have the comfort of feeling that while circumstances leave it at all possible, it will remain in my studio, free from danger of every kind, such as it would meet with in the hands of picture dealers and restorers.

"Believe me, yours faithfully,

"W. Holman Hunt."

Sig. Emilio Burci, Inspector of the Uffizi Gallery, writes to me, "I congratulate you upon a selection of paintings of our older Tuscan schools, which must have cost you much persevering research and money. Among the number, by no means small, of excellent ones, permit me to especially notice as very remarkable and rare, even among us, the 'Rape of Dejanira,' by Antonio Pollajuolo, the beautiful 'Madonna and Child,' by Botticelli, 'St. Girolomo,' by Fra Fillipo Lippo, 'Annunciation,' by Lorenzo di Credi, 'Sacra Familia,' by Lo Spagna, and the extremely rare and beautiful 'Adoration of the Magi,' by Luca Signorelli."

I might fill many pages with similar testimonials from European amateurs and officers of various academies and galleries, but enough have been given to prove that these old masters merit the attention of those interested in the culture of art in our country. The best credentials are the objects themselves, but as yet there are comparatively few Americans qualified to pronounce on them.

There are one hundred and twenty pictures now temporarily deposited — not *sold*, as it is often stated in the public prints — in the Yale School of Fine Arts; and about twenty-five [1] others, including some of the most valuable and important, still in Europe, awaiting a convenient opportunity to be added to those in New Haven. But this depends on finding an institution devoted to Art, in one of our cities, willing to carry out my plan of a public gallery based on historical sequence of motives and the regular progress of technical improvement and changes of style, so arranged that the best æsthetic effect as a whole shall be produced. In most European galleries of old foundation, notably the Pitti, the pictures are sacrificed to the exigencies of localities not designed in reference to light or artistic effect. Hence in this and the Uffizi there is a conglomeration of styles, epochs, and masters, joined to inefficient light, exceedingly confusing to the student and detri-

[1] See *London Athenæum*, of June 5th, 1869.

mental to the objects themselves. By a judicious rearrangement and uniting of the Pitti, Uffizi, and Belle Arti galleries, besides the adoption of a system of national exchanges by which the redundant Florentine masters might be bartered for those of other schools which are wanting, separating sculpture from painting, grouping the Titians, Raphaels, Leonardos, and chief masters each by themselves, Florence would have a unique gallery. Spain, France, England, and Germany, each might be induced to exchange some of the surplus masterpieces of their own artists for Italian, to their mutual benefit. America, in the outset, can erect galleries which shall secure the essentials of light, ventilation, and systematic æsthetic distribution. But until there is something to put into them they would be useless structures. Having labored so long in this cause I am not willing to abandon it except in the last personal extremity, or until convinced that Americans have no sympathy whatever with it. At the risk of being charged with obtrusive egoism I venture to make a final appeal in this form, inviting any of my countrymen who do sympathize, or any institution making art culture an object, to confer with me on a feasible plan of æsthetic education and keeping together for public use the collection of old masters as a basis of a free gallery. Up to this time I have never been able to exhibit the entire gallery in America. Even the beautiful edifice at New Haven founded by Mr. Street, which is all that could be desired for light, is crowded with the portion that is hung there. Were I a rich man, I could not possess a house ample to contain and exhibit them. Nothing short of a large public museum, erected expressly to accommodate works of art, would suffice. If dispersed, as they must soon be, unless a suitable building is prepared to receive them, however pleasing the isolated pictures might be to private owners, the benefit of the series collectively would be lost to the public, as also to myself the aim of eighteen years of expenditure, toil, and study; although for my own daily gratification, and the instruction of my children, I would greatly prefer to select my favorite pictures to hang on my own walls. As it now exists, it offers a modest foundation for other amateurs of more means and knowledge to establish on it a museum of art, which may be enlarged so as to meet the æsthetic wants of one of our cities as agreeably and usefully as does the newly established museum at Kensington that of London.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE ART OF THE FUTURE.

THE brief summary given of past and present phases of the æsthetic life of nations naturally suggests some thoughts regarding its future. As a basis we must take a retrospective view of each dominant principle and aspect of the several great periods which underlie the art of to-day. It is unnecessary to recall the specific styles of early paganism; to wit, the Egyptian, Hindoo, Etruscan, or Assyrian, but we can limit our glance to its highest form, the Grecian. To this there is to be opposed the antagonistic mediæval art, its special reaction towards classical influences under the guise of the late Renaissance, and those democratic motives which are coextensive with the spread of Protestant ideas.

Art is the material representative of the ideal, whether it be on a spiritual, intellectual, or sensual basis. Hence, to predicate of the art of an epoch we have first to get a clear vision of its immediate passion, or what it most covets. The basis, therefore, of any profound art, is in the popular religion. Whatever a man absolutely loves, that he worships or esteems dearest to his soul. The Greeks, passionately loving beauty, strength, and wisdom, made of these abstract ideals a faith, and of their ideal forms an art. Theirs was essentially the poetical-imaginative; its primary and final significance being æsthetic pleasure.

Imagination equally controlled mediæval art, which was the offspring of an even more profound human love; not of present pleasure but of future bliss. As has been shown, the pagan, seeing in his earthly organization the means of realizing his ideal, strenuously sought to reach it by the cultivation of his physical and mental powers. But the Christian, viewing the sensuous faculties as snares, put them under a ban. Stimulating his imagination by an intense belief in a delightsome life beyond the grave, he projected into his art corresponding pictures of the

occupations and conditions of his future home in the heavens; and to keep the hunger and thirst of spiritual joys more acute in his soul, he let loose on his outward senses an ideal world of physical horrors, or the bottomless pit of burning torments called a hell, preaching the while with fanatical fervor, asceticism, as an additional safeguard against the seductions of his material being. Though the means were so antagonistic, the ends in view of pagan and Christian art were similar. Each acted on a common principle of an ideal happiness. But the Christian scope and application was even more one-sided and limited than the other. Excluding, if it might, every element of the sensuous and sensual, it sowed the seeds of its overthrow in its own bosom. These grew up into the shapes of the bastard Renaissance, that based its ideal on corrupt mundane pleasures and human power as opposed to divine power. Both classical and mediæval art had worshipped the godlike, as each comprehended the term, with noble effect in their respective forms. Even the element of Fear in the latter, as exhibited in the effigies of devils and the damned, was a restricted one when compared with that of Love. The beautiful-ideal in the shape of angels, holy Virgins, and the bright beings that administer to the spiritual comfort and joy of men, everywhere abounded, while the pictures and plastic representations of the demon-side of Christianity were comparatively sparse and rare. But when the Renaissance became degraded into a vulgar worship of man-power and an exhibition of the aristocratic ideal of tyranny and lusts, art lost its saving grace and became a wretched epitome of human foolishness, until the democratic spirit born of Protestantism, rescued it from exclusive hands, and breathed into it new forces of life. An ideal founded wholly on worldly ambitions and passions, necessarily partakes of their transitory, material nature, and is devoted to presenting them in every possible variety as the ultimate of human desire. Its forms may be legitimate and wholesome. They are apt to be selfish, sensual, or foolish. But the moment human aspiration rises above a mundane level into an ideal atmosphere of the godlike, be it of Olympus or Paradise, it lifts art bodily into a more elevated sphere. However greatly the virtue of pagan may differ from the virtue of Christian art proper, both seek to exalt humanity by presenting to it examples of an ideal perfection, and eliminating whatever corrupts and makes a lie. We may have an agreeable art speaking to the sensations, or an intellectual one to the

mind, on the plane of the worldly ideal; but no art can be profoundly great, beautiful, and good, unless its aspirations are stimulated by hopes and visions that have not their exact counterpart and fruition in our earthly being. In its largest sense, religion is that state of soul which ardently craves ideal goodness, beauty, and felicity. Art that ignores it has no permanent, universal value.

Two ways present themselves of securing the spiritual happiness held in store as a compensation for trials in present life; one founded on a divine revelation of man's ideal, calling for unquestioning faith, and the other on all-sifting reason, which by means of human philosophy, would subject all faiths to the scrutiny of exact science. Before the period of the Reformation of Luther, the spiritualistic way most obtained. Mankind, however, was not so much spiritual-minded, in the true acceptation of this phrase, as prone to emotional life; their passions, sentiments, and imaginations, whether superstitiously or devoutly led, being more exercised than their logical faculties. Profound religious feeling at that time permeated art. But it lost its force and gradually passed into oblivion, as it was brought in contact with the growing rationalistic tendencies of the era of printed books. What art lost in profundity and spirituality it gained in breadth and variety; in naturalness, so to speak, on the common plane of humanity. Passing first from ecclesiastical, then from aristocratic control, it grew more and more democratic and commercial; more domestic in its motives; more disposed to illustrate the facts of ordinary men's lives, their hopes, beliefs, passions, and deeds; to adorn the fireside rather than the palace or cathedral; to go to common nature for subjects; to catch her passing, and record her permanent truths in a realistic sense; in fine, art, under Protestant guidance, became less abstract, less ideal, either as ecstatic joy or ascetic suffering, and more a thing of home life, suited to the popular apprehension and tastes. The change has been a radical one, though not yet completed. Art is in a condition of transition. Dogma, as a vital authority, has ceased to govern it. Then, too, the old spiritual ideal has passed away while the new is yet unformed. So it happened to classical art. The interregnum then, however, was one of ignorance, superstition, and debased conceptions. Now, if we have no high art, we possess a wholesome, pleasurable, natural, instructive one. I speak in a general sense, referring especially to the sound morality and comprehensive motives of the Prot-

estant schools and the French purists. Not content with illustrating modern life in its every-day moods, like Hamon and his followers, or Leys and his, they go back to mediæval scenes and pagan homes for motives, vividly bringing before our eyes the picturesque, historic, and domestic past. The old art was more restricted in knowledge, science, and ideas, though more intense and ecstatic. Its capacity of comfort and hope to individuals of a certain temperament or training undoubtedly was greater, but as a means of happiness and improvement to the masses, its power was less. Yet the promise of our present art is far beyond its actual realization. This must continue to be materialistic and unimaginative so long as it gives more stress to the outward fact than the inward life, refuses to admit the inspiration of a purer religious faith than that of the past, and does not attain that just balance of thought, science, and imagination which is needed to produce consummate work.

The spirit of our century, however defective, is still eminently humanitarian in contrast with all preceding. If the dogmatic forms of Christianity have lost much of their power, peoples begin to comprehend better the gospel meaning of "peace and good will to all men;" to take a more intelligible view of divine goodness and wisdom; and, as a whole, more seriously inquire what they shall do to be saved. Thought being freed, truth comes to the light as never before. Science is no longer made to be an enemy to religion. Mediævalists in the main were content, or forced to be, to believe whatever was told them by the Church, without self-inquiry. Moderns, rejecting monopolies of all sorts, decide more on personal responsibility those problems which most affect individual welfare now and hereafter. Theology, as a science, is descending from the keeping of a caste to the understandings of the many, greatly to the spread of those universal principles of love, faith, and charity which soften the hearts of men, and cause them to regard each other more fraternally as children of one Father.

This speculative, moral view of humanity may be viewed as foreign to my topic. But if we admit that religion is the soundest basis of a noble art, then whatever gives more breadth, vigor, and depth to the religious sentiments must proportionally affect art. Rationalism is in the ascendant just now, and wisely; for it sifts, probes, and justifies all things, though it does not always see so far, deeply, or intently as the imaginative faculties. Our highest art is now the abstract in book-forms. But will it always remain there?

Whenever the pure ethics of the gospel of Jesus shall exorcise from religion the narrowness, bigotry, irrationalism, and disturbing influences of sectarian dogmas, the freed imagination will see visions of celestial things more radiant than ever. Æsthetics, morality, philosophy, and faith must come more into harmony. Out of the great joy and progress thus begotten, fresh heavens will be opened to mortal eyes, which shall become a model for a new sacred art, far exceeding in beauty the departed. A thousand years in His sight are as one day. None can tell the hour of the coming of the Lord. Neither can one foresee the whole nature and functions of the new phase. But may we not conclude that the abstract, dogmatic, and symbolical will give way to a more vivid and rational apprehension of spiritual life than has hitherto obtained? Angels will then be "the spirits of just men made perfect," needing no wings to symbolize their celestial functions. There will be more Virgins than one; complete women, chastely maternal, fulfilling duties with holy joy. Saints will increase, requiring no martyrdom of their bodies to confirm their titles to salvation. The Word, whether received as the Father, Son, or the Spirit, will be approved to human intelligence as Divine Love, Wisdom, and Beauty. Then may men be moved by their new ideal of a heaven not made with hands, to construct edifices consecrated to their new happiness, such as art has not yet conceived. Hitherto, the current theology or belief in God and Devil has overflowed in fanatical extremes on to this earth, making of religion to the many either a forced sacrifice, irrational belief, or dark despair; evil so often overcoming good as to beget the gross materialism which now so widely obtains in Italy, France, and Spain, to the loss of the former repose in sacred art and rites, without so far substituting in the masses the logical convictions, enterprise, and restlessness leading to liberal progress that is found in America. It is only the bravest of freethinkers in those countries that dares to die unreconciled to the ecclesiastics whose authority they contemned while in health. Even an excommunicated Cavour sends for the sacraments in his death-hour. In my own family an Italian maid disbelieves altogether in future existence, and yet dares not neglect any ordinance of the Church. Few Italians can now be found to say with St. Francis in his mediæval hymn, "Praised be my Lord for our sister, *the death of the body*." If there be anything they especially dread it is death; next, growing old. Their heaven for certu-

ries, like that of the French, has settled more and more into the earth, carrying both peoples down with it.

The mediævalist had more diversion. So did the Greek. Their art soothed and gladdened their lives. But their successors, deprived of all of their faith except its fear, have become sad and timid; half skeptic, half hypocrite; not knowing either how best to enjoy this existence, or secure a firm hold on a better. The perpetual struggle of Paris to look gay, fresh, and prosperous on the outside is a mournful fact of its phase of modern civilization. A grimace on every lip, and a worm in every heart. Sad is it to him who sees what is behind the gas-lights, and detects the wrinkled skin underneath the enamelled face. Americans are charged with not knowing how to amuse themselves. But there is far more real animation of heart, of social and civic life, faith in themselves, their country, and their God; more vitality and absolute rational enjoyment of existence in America than in Europe, especially outside of England and Germany. This intenser spirit is not due to any constitutional superiority of one race over another, but to a fuller liberty of self-development. An upheaval of old conditions of society in view of reconstruction is apparent everywhere, but nowhere is the movement more active than in the Great Republic. Our new solutions of social and political problems are having a more quickening effect in Europe than we receive from the fruits of their long tried civilizations. What we get back in ideas or populations speedily disappears in the more powerful solvent of American institutions, to reappear in forms indigenous to the continent. That which Europe receives in return each year leavens it more profusely with American results, which are steadily sapping the foundations of its old political fabric. It was not until that shout of joy went up from the throats of the European aristocracy at the supposed overthrow of the American Union by rebels, that America became conscious of her moral weight abroad. Sometimes we cavil at the name of America for not being sufficiently distinctive of our nationality. But it seems as if Providence had bestowed it on us as a token that we are to occupy the entire continent as one people of one name and will.

The art that is to grow out of such a destiny will be commensurate to its grandeur and beneficence. Lavater says, "He only who has enjoyed immortal moments can reproduce them." Three we have already had; the Landing of the Pilgrims, the

War of Independence, and the late Rebellion, each deciding immortal destinies.) One more may be in store to decide as firmly and finally the principles of religious liberty as have been those of political and material progress. The ethical constitution to regulate social rights and secure exact justice to all has yet to be promulgated, either as a result of discussion and experiment, or of actual warfare. Great events form the character and solidarity of peoples; art illustrates them. Our latest "immortal moment" has caused the projection of innumerable monuments to commemorate the sacrifices and virtues that secured the victory for right. A still severer struggle, growing out of the more profound instincts of the soul at stake, would give to art, to reproduce in material form, an even more illustrious moment of history.

Shall we possess an art capable of this? Looking only at its present superficial aspect, its common range of motives, its thoroughly realistic bias and materialistic treatment, its prevailing mistake of the pretty-sentimental for the beautiful-ideal, its vulgar basis of mere business, the indifference and ignorance of the people at large, and the misconceptions of intellectual classes represented by a scholar like Theodore Parker, — looking at American art only on this side, one might despair of its future. "The fine arts do not interest me," said Parker, "so much as the coarse arts which feed, clothe, house, and comfort a people. I should rather be a great man as Franklin than a Michael Angelo; nay, if I had a son I should rather see him a mechanic, who organized use, like the late George Stephenson in England, than a great painter like Rubens, who only copied beauty."

Æsthetic culture only can remedy these deficiencies, and open the senses of all classes to the efficacy of art as a potent civilizer and dispenser of happiness. If every painter were a Rubens in selection and treatment of topics, there might be some force to the point of Parker, for he painted but little that is calculated to inspire the mind with lofty sentiment or refined pleasure. He was chiefly a painter of vanities for courts, academic sacred art for a degenerate, persecuting church, and coarsenesses for the populace. Even he created more than he "copied" beauty, such as it was. But his standard of beauty, low and sensual as it undoubtedly is, has a charm for many minds incapable of being touched by anything purer and higher, and which serves to raise them æsthetically and intellectually somewhat above their natural material level of thought and action. Indeed, we may test

the fallacy of the argument of Parker on its own basis of use.

"Which is most useful to man, that which adds to his physical comfort or mental and spiritual welfare? This is the real issue between representative men of the extremes of utilitarianism and æsthetics, like Franklin and Michael Angelo. I endorse most comprehensively the value of the "coarse arts" that "feed, clothe, house, and comfort" peoples, and rejoice in the advent of each benefactor in their line. But can an improved stove, cheaper bread, handier building materials, more rapid locomotion, or any of the multiform results of our laws on patents, do for the mind what the fine art of a Michael Angelo does? The one is a fresh convenience to the body, easily replaced or readily forgotten. Purely material in structure and application, it has no direct connection with the soul, which lives as serenely in its immortal atmosphere without the physical object as with it. But the fine art that gave us Leonardo's "Last Supper;" Raphael's "Madonna del Sisto;" the "Eve" and "St. Sebastian" of Sodoma; the heavenly hosts of Fra Angelico; the revelations of the misery of sinners by Luca Signorelli and Orgagna; the sympathy with despairing labor that Jules Breton shows; the symbolism and conscience of Holman Hunt; the good cheer and gush of human emotions that Millais puts into his pictures; the lofty idea, in plastic form, of Africa awakening to a new life, essayed by Anne Whitney; the robust truth of form and character of Ward; the passionate glow of suggestive color of Inness; all these and their like comfort the mind. Did not Parker's own Teacher say, referring to the excessive materialism of his times, "Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body more than raiment?" "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

Ideas and emotions once received into the soul are a constituent part of it forever. Their superiority of use, therefore, is as incontestable as their origin and office are nobler than those of tangible objects that administer only to the physical well-being. Socrates could command but a mite of worldly resources, had not a patented object in his mean habitation, never heard of steam, the telegraph, or cheap clothing and fuel for the million, but he left a legacy of mental and moral riches to his fellow men, such as in comparison makes all that the countless

treasure of the Rothschilds can buy, seem but poverty itself. If access to the soul be shut out by over service and luxury to the body, fine intellectual appeals fall on organizations too callous to heed them. The distinction of offices between him who works only for the physical wants and he who administers to the growth of the soul, is indeed a marked one. I might add that fine art reacts even more conspicuously on the material prosperity of a nation than the "coarse arts" do on the finer. It would require the cost of many railroads or cotton mills to buy up the fine art of Italy as an investment, because of its being a vast productive capital, supporting a large number of people, and adding yearly to the accumulative public wealth with but little outlay to keep it. Improved machinery and locomotion cheapen articles of common consumption and promote circulation. Fine art galleries do as much, and help the buying capacity of the cities where they exist. I should consider these facts unnecessary to present, were not so many otherwise intelligent persons deluded by the apparent common sense of the Parkerian theory of use, which is sheer foolishness. In favor of the spread of fine art in America we have a fresh æsthetic constitution and temperament, the increasing passion of decoration, ornament, and festivals; a keen native instinct for color and form; the patriotic desire to commemorate public men and events; a vast wealth, each year more liberally given to beneficent purposes by living benefactors; increasing means of culture; a juster appreciation of national defects and deficiencies in art, an intenser spiritual apprehension of life, arising from the varied religious agitations, as an offset to the redundant realism founded on rapid material progress, and above all, the growing recognition of humanity at large as the true object of effort, to make the earth more pleasant for man's temporary abode while schooling for a higher existence. The passion of the Greek for beauty made his art beautiful, just as the emotional fervor of the mediævalist made his spiritual. We are not called to repeat either Minervas, Venuses, Queens of Heaven, or any of the effete forms of effete mythologies, but to create anew according to more advanced notions of heroisms, celestial and mundane. Each after its kind in art; realism, or "the glory of the terrestrial," as St. Paul defines the idealisms of earth, and "the glory of the celestial" those of heaven. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The artist should beware of confounding the spiritual in art

with the realistic. Both are legitimate phases. Only, however, as we are able to make art appear immortal and incorruptible do we raise it to the standard of the just made perfect. The American school will be born of our own material and spiritual life; our own faith in and sacrifices for humanity; and of those profound social, political, and religious convictions that make up a religion of the heart, whose fruit shall be the divinely announced "Peace and Good-will" of Bethlehem.

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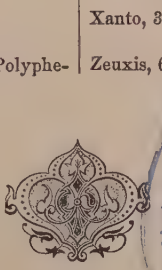

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